



COSSA Washington Update

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CONGRESS FINISHES APPROPRIATIONS; APPROVES NOMINEES

After rounds of negotiations with the re-elected Bush Administration, Congress finally finished the spending bills for FY 2005 on November 21. By wrapping up the nine remaining appropriations bills into one omnibus spending bill, the process ended almost seven weeks into the new fiscal year. Although many details of what Congress has wrought remain undisclosed as *UPDATE* goes to press, some funding information is available.

In order to remain within the overall spending limits set by the Administration and Congress, an across-the-board (ATB) cut of 0.8 percent will affect all non-security spending. Thus, the National Science Foundation (NSF) ends up with close to \$5.5 billion, almost a two-percent reduction from its FY 2004 funding level. NSF suffered in order for NASA to receive the full funding increase requested by the Administration and advocated vociferously for by House Majority Leader Tom DeLay (R-TX). The Research and Related Activities Account will receive \$4.22 billion, approximately a \$30 million decrease from FY 2004. The Congress will leave it to the NSF to determine how those funds are distributed among the directorates.

Congress confirmed Arden Bement for a six-year term as NSF's new director and all eight nominees to the National Science Board, including American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS) Chief Executive Officer, Alan Leshner.

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COSSA HOLDS ITS ANNUAL MEETING IN WASHINGTON

COSSA held its Annual Meeting in Washington, DC on November 8. More than 70 representatives from member organizations convened to hear speakers on social and behavioral science policy issues as well as engage in a dialogue about the year ahead.

With the election still a hot topic on everyone's mind, the meeting was abuzz with talk of how the second Bush administration may affect science policy. After introductory remarks by Executive Director Howard Silver, Kathleen Frankovic, Director of Surveys and a Producer for CBS News, opened the meeting with a lively

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The National Institutes of Health (NIH) will receive about \$28.4 billion after the ATB cut. The National Institutes of Justice (NIJ) will receive \$54.6 million, \$9.9 million of which will go to social science research and evaluation after the ATB cut. The Bureau of Justice Statistics will be given \$33.7 million. In addition, Congress restored the Senate cut to the American Community Survey (ACS), funding it at \$146 million (see story on page 5).

Congress also confirmed all new members of the National Board of Educational Sciences, which will finally allow it to get organized two years after the enactment of the legislation creating it as the oversight body for the Institute for Education Sciences. Eugene Hickok is now officially the Deputy Secretary of Education. In addition, Dennis Shea will become the Assistant Secretary for Policy, Development and Research at the Department of Housing and Urban Development.

Stay tuned for the December 13 issue of *UPDATE*, which will be a double issue and feature a full assessment of the Omnibus bill as well as a round up of the 108th Congress.

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discussion of voting patterns and the role of public opinion polls in the 2004 election.

Frankovic pointed out that this election was unique from its inception. Democratic voters were singularly focused upon finding “a candidate who could beat George W. Bush.” At the time Kerry was nominated, Bush was having trouble in Iraq, and his once sky-high 90 percent approval ratings were down around 50 percent. For this reason, Kerry was seen as a good choice. Unfortunately, he never lost that label, and consequently failed to pick up an overwhelming number of voters who were genuinely enthusiastic about *him* as a candidate. According to Frankovic, almost one third of Kerry voters claimed that they were voting for him because he was *not* George W. Bush. In contrast, more than two-thirds of Bush supporters polled were enthusiastic about their candidate.

“What set this campaign apart was the intensity and perceived intensity of this election,” Frankovic said. While the raw number of first-time voters skyrocketed with over 115 million newly registered, the percentages fell within similar ranges of the 2000 election. For example, Al Gore won 52 percent of the first-time voters in 2000. Kerry also fell within that range, with

approximately 54 percent. What differed, however, was that the percentage of voters paying attention to this election was surprisingly high. Frankovic noted that more than 80 percent of voters surveyed characterized this election as “important,” and 25 percent expressed great fear of the opposition candidate winning.

Frankovic concluded her remarks by addressing the accuracy of exit polling. She named a number of factors that could have played into the inaccuracy of the polls, including response rates, interviewer training, and data collection problems. Frankovic pointed out that despite having the results of exit polls, the major news networks were reluctant to declare winners and losers, unlike in the 2000 election.

Virginia Gray of the Midwest Political Science Association asked Frankovic’s opinion of the theory that vote counts, rather than exit polling data, were incorrect. Such massive voting machine failures would not occur on the statewide level, Frankovic postulated, but rather on the county level, seeing as how counties run the gamut in terms of which voting technology they employ. Troy Duster, President of the American Sociological Association, posed a natural follow-up question: “Is there a mandate?” Frankovic responded by saying that “right now, there are a lot of questions about that.” She noted that after any election, boasting that your candidate received the people’s mandate is natural – but that at this juncture, there is no clear issue on which Bush has harnessed widespread support. She predicted that this will become more apparent when Congress returns and “starts acting out.”

Panelists Discuss Science’s Relationship With Capitol Hill

After discussing the dynamics of the 2004 election, COSSA hosted a panel of experts on the future of science policy and politics. Silver opened up a dialogue among the panelists by focusing on the recent editorial in *Science* magazine by American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS) Chief Executive Officer Alan Leshner, who argued that “the relationship between science and large segments of the U.S. public and policy communities is...eroding.” Albert H. (Al) Teich, Director of Science and Policy Programs at the AAAS, went a step further by citing several examples of how Leshner’s use of the word “erosion” may be inaccurate, given the many attacks that the science research community has endured since the 1970’s. Teich, noting the perpetual scrutiny of sexual research by both Congress and the Executive Branch, argued that the current tension is merely a

continuation of an increasingly adversarial relationship between science research and policymaking.

Also on the panel was Howard H. Garrison, Director of the Office of Public Affairs (OPA) of the Federation of American Societies for Experimental Biology (FASEB). Garrison mentioned that the recent increased scrutiny of scientific research is largely due to three factors: 1) substantial increases in National Science Foundation (NSF) and the National Institutes of Health (NIH) budgets, 2) increasing legislative challenges to scientific research freedom in areas such as sex research, and 3) dramatic shifts in recent elections that have changed accessibility to the legislative process. According to Garrison, it was not long ago that the goal of many scientific and research organizations was to “make biomedical research a front-page issue.” Now, he pointed out, it is difficult to make the news coverage stop, and projects once considered minor have become justifications to attempt to deny funds to NIH or NSF.

Furthermore, the legislative gridlock of the 1990’s spawned the practice of circumventing the deliberative process in Congress in favor of “stealth amendments” that were passed in the middle of the night. According to Garrison, the use of these amendments as ammunition against science research has become more prevalent since the 2000 election, which ushered in the period of total Republican control that “had a dramatic impact on the way we do business.” Whereas the science community had always gained access to important players in the science policy process, it now became increasingly difficult to meet with key congressional leaders and their staffs.

Teich and Garrison’s overview of the struggle between science and policymakers provided an appropriate segue to the third panelist, outgoing Minority Staff Director of the House Science Committee Bob Palmer. He recounted several especially bitter struggles against attacks on science research during his years on Capitol Hill, and pointed to an increasing political activism in the science community. In particular, he cited the recent report from the Union of Concerned Scientists as well as a similar submission from 20 Nobel Laureates condemning the Administration’s abuse of science. Palmer also raised the important issue of whether a scientist’s political affiliation should be called into question when giving science advice to the government.

Silver opened discussion by posing a question about the conventional image of bi-partisan support for science in Congress: “Given what has happened in the

last four to five years, has this bipartisanship eroded to the point where science is just another policy issue that divides the parties – and what implications does this have for funding and success?” Palmer responded by expressing surprise that science receives as much bipartisan support as it does, considering that the community is not known for giving significant campaign contributions. Palmer further went on to caution that it is “dangerous” for research scientists to openly make campaign contributions. Garrison pointed to a lack of deep understanding of science research in the policy community, while Teich added that despite fluctuations in the political involvement of the science community, the amount of research and development funding consistently correlates to the overall course of discretionary spending.

Volkow: Genetic and Environmental Influences on Substance Abuse

Nora Volkow, Director of the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA), brought COSSA members a slice of cutting edge research on genetics, environment, and drug abuse. Volkow spoke about addiction as a developmental disease of the brain, citing statistics and studies illustrating the connection between brain chemistry and drug abuse.

She explained that substance addiction is a matter of dopamine transmission. In demonstrating how addiction fundamentally changes brain activity, Volkow showed laboratory scans of both healthy and addicted brains that exhibited markedly different metabolic activity. She demonstrated that when a drug user continues to consume drugs, their dopamine receptors decrease, making it gradually more difficult to derive the same pleasure from use. Therefore, as their receptors decrease, more and more of the drug is needed to achieve the same high as before. This is the same mechanism at work in alcoholism and obesity, as well.

Volkow also argued that environmental stressors can play a significant role in drug abuse. She illustrated this by showing the results of an experiment with several primates that were put into both individually and group-housed environments. When the primates were individually housed, their brains showed a moderate level of stress, but when a particular primate was moved into a group-housed situation in which he was the dominant party, his brain activity showed far more relaxation. However, if he or she remained a subordinate, the stress levels continued at the same or higher levels than before. When given the option to self-administer small amounts of cocaine, the dominant, less-stressed primates showed far lower levels of desire for the drug.

Volkow spoke extensively about the need to translate scholarly research on addiction treatment to policy makers and the public at large. On a list of ailments indicating the percentage of recommended care people receive, Volkow noted several, such as prenatal care, senior cataracts, and breast cancer that average 70-80 percent. She contrasted that with alcohol dependents, who on average, received just under 15 percent of the recommended treatment. Her final message to the social and behavioral scientists in the audience was to focus on advancing the science and erasing the stigma attached to drug addiction in order to better understand and treat it.

Ward Projects Future Needs for SBE Sciences at NSF

The final speaker of the day was Wanda E. Ward, Acting Assistant Director for Social, Behavioral and Economic Sciences (SBE) at the NSF. Ward focused on the need to increase funding for the SBE sciences and explained the distribution of social and behavioral science research topics between the Division of Behavioral and Cognitive Sciences (BCS) and the Division of Social and Economic Sciences (SES) at NSF.

Ward gave COSSA members an overall picture of NSF grant awards in the SES and BCS, showing that in order for the awards to be on parity with the rest of the foundation's grants, several steps must be taken. She showed that SES and BCS proposal success rates are lower than the overall NSF research proposal success rate (17 and 16 percent, respectively, in comparison to an overall rate of 21 percent). In order to rectify this shortcoming, SES needs an additional \$15.7 million and BCS \$14.1 million to bring these divisions' success rates on par with the rest of the Foundation.

Despite this need for additional funding parity with the rest of the sciences, Ward offered encouraging words about emerging initiatives such as the Human Social Dynamics Competition in FY2004 (see story on this page). She also praised several projects that received FY2004 grants, including proposals from the East-West Center in Hawaii, the Santa Fe Institute, the University of Arizona, the University of Washington, and the institutions participating in the Decision Making Under Uncertainty (DMUU) and Science of Learning Centers (see *UPDATE* October 25, 2004).

NSF SEEKS NEW HUMAN AND SOCIAL DYNAMICS PROPOSALS

The National Science Foundation has announced a new solicitation for proposals in its Human and Social Dynamics (HSD) priority area. There are three categories of proposals: **Exploratory Research Proposals and Research Community Development proposals, which are due on February 9, 2005; and Full Research Proposals, which are due on February 23, 2005.**

NSF has made some changes to the competition from its previous solicitation for FY 2004 HSD funds. In FY 2005, an individual may participate in only one HSD proposal. All projects must include three or more senior personnel from at least two different fields. The maximum amount that may be requested for Full Research proposals is \$750,000; for Exploratory Research or Research Community Development proposals the maximum is \$125,000. Indirect costs are included in both of these maximum limits.

The FY 2005 HSD competition will be limited to three areas of emphasis for consideration: Agents of Change; Dynamics of Human Behavior; and Decision Making, Risk and Uncertainty. There will be no competition for Infrastructure in FY 2005.

For further information see: www.nsf.gov/home/crssprgm/hsd/ or contact Keith Crank at 703/292-4880 or kcrank@nsf.gov.

FY 2004 HSD Competition

At the meeting of the Directorate for Social, Behavioral and Economic (SBE) Sciences Advisory Committee on November 4, Rachele Hollander and Keith Crank, the HSD coordinators, reviewed the results of the 2004 competition.

There were 1061 Letters of Intent that led to 800 eligible proposals representing 694 projects that included submissions from all states. A total of \$570 million was requested with a budget of only about \$20 million. Twenty-three panels consisting of 259 reviewers evaluated the proposals. All reviews were completed within three months of proposal submission. Of the 694 projects, 113 costing about \$80 million received Highly Recommended (HR) reviews. Because of limited funds, 37 projects were awarded grants. Of these, 30 percent involved international research counterparts or sub-awards.

NATIONAL ACADEMIES ISSUE REPORT ON PRESIDENTIAL SCIENCE APPOINTMENTS

In the light of accusations that the Bush administration has politicized the scientific appointment process (see *UPDATE*, May 27, 2004), the National Academies of Science have released the third in a series of reports that tell U.S. policy makers to improve the presidential appointment process for senior science and technology (S&T) posts and for federal S&T advisory committees.

Speaking at a press conference accompanying the release of *Science and Technology in the National Interest*, former Rep. John Porter (R-IL), who chaired the panel that prepared the report, declared: “Failure to attract qualified people to high-ranking S&T positions, or misuse of the federal advisory committee system, would compromise the government’s effectiveness on important issues.”

In order to accomplish the first goal, the report draws on the work of the Brookings Institution/American Enterprise Institute Presidential Appointment Initiative under the leadership of New York University’s Paul Light. That initiative – which looked across all government positions, not just S&T – noted the difficulties that nominees for public policy posts face in terms of time to confirmation, salaries, conflict of interest, redundant forms to fill out, and a host of other practices that can sometimes make seeking top government positions an obstacle course. As the new report notes, these factors are also true for top S&T positions. The report even notes that a first year associate at the 25 largest firms in New York receives higher compensation than the Director of National Institutes of Health (NIH).

With regard to the appointment of scientists to advisory committees, the report explicitly states that “authorities should make certain that appointments to advisory committees are not politicized or used to promote foregone conclusions.” Porter argued that candidates for these slots should not be asked about their political party preference, voting behavior, or non-relevant policy positions. What should be important, Porter noted, is the advisory panel member’s scientific and technical knowledge and their personal and professional integrity.

The report also calls for the appointment of a “confidential assistant to the president for science and technology” as soon as possible after a presidential

election in order to provide advice in the event of a crisis and to help identify strong candidates for crucial S&T appointments. The report names 26 of these across the government. The President would then presumably nominate this “confidential assistant” as the director of the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy.

Porter responded to a question asking whether this report would have any impact, given his admission that the 2000 report was generally ignored. The former Congressman assured the audience that he was determined that people would pay attention to this one and not let it disappear on a shelf.

GAO RELEASES REPORT ON ACS; FUNDING RESTORED

As supporters successfully rallied to restore \$146 million in appropriations for the American Community Survey (ACS), the U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO) released its assessment of the study, including some key unresolved issues and recommendations for its future. The ACS is a shorter-form survey being developed and pilot-tested to replace the long-form decennial census (see *UPDATE*, November 8, 2004).

The House Committee on Government Reform asked that the GAO conduct this inquiry in order to 1) “review the Census Bureau’s testing program on operational and programmatic aspects that will affect the reliability of small geographic area data,” and 2) to “determine whether alternatives to the proposed ACS would provide more frequent and more reliable data for small geographic areas.” The report contains three overall recommendations. First, the GAO recommended that the ACS resolve the issues that might affect data reliability for smaller geographic communities, such as the debate about concept of residence, a lack of guidance for users on the characteristics and shortcomings of three to five year averages for populations of less than 65,000, haggling over questionnaire design, and making the ACS consistent with the 2000 Census long-form data. The report criticized the Census Bureau for claiming it had a plan, but only being able to produce a rough outline to resolve these issues.

Second, the GAO recommended that key stakeholders be given more direct and timely input into the development of the ACS and the resolution of pending concerns. As evidence, the GAO cited the bureau’s unresponsiveness to several National Academies of

Sciences (NAS) reports regarding the ACS. Finally, the report argued that the ACS needed to provide more public documentation for key decisions being made, which the Secretary of the Census Bureau agreed with.

Furthermore, the report made good on its second objective by providing an alternative plan to the proposed ACS that would provide “more timely and reliable small geographic data.” It would involve incorporating an additional 4.8 million housing units into the sample for 2009-2011, which would then be reduced to three million in subsequent years.

STATE-OF-THE-SCIENCE CONFERENCE HELD ON VIOLENCE PREVENTION

Based on an extensive collection of scientific literature related to youth violence prevention, a National Institutes of Health (NIH) state-of-the-science conference has determined that programs that use “scare tactics to prevent children and adolescents from engaging in violent behavior are not only ineffective but may actually make the problem worse.” The two-and-a-half day meeting, *Preventing Violence and Related Health-Risking Social Behaviors in Adolescents: An NIH State-of-the-Science Conference*, was sponsored by the Office of Medical Applications of Research and the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH). It brought together a 13-member independent panel to examine the current state of knowledge regarding adolescent violence and related health-risking social behavior.

Convened under the NIH Consensus Development Program, the panel’s report is not a policy statement of the NIH or the Federal Government. Established in 1977, the program is a mechanism designed to assess controversial topics in medicine and public health in an unbiased, impartial manner. The conference was cosponsored by the NIH Office of Behavioral and Social Sciences Research, the National Institute of Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism, the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, the National Institute on Drug Abuse, National Institute of Nursing Research, the National Library of Medicine, the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, the U.S. Department of Education, and the U.S. Department of Justice.

The independent panel, chaired by Robert L. Johnson of the Department of Pediatrics at the University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey, was charged

with assessing the available evidence on preventing violence and other health-risking behaviors in adolescents. Members of the panel included researchers and practitioners in community and family medicine, economics, behavioral health, juvenile justice, outcomes research, pediatrics, nursing, psychiatry, and a public representative. Presenting the findings of the panel, Johnson explained that the “good news is that a number of intervention programs have been demonstrated to be effective through randomized controlled trials.”

The panel heard the latest research findings on risk and protective factors involved in the development of youth violence and related behaviors, as well as on interventions to reduce those behaviors. They then addressed six questions:

1. What are the factors that contribute to violence and associated adverse health outcomes in childhood and adolescence?
2. What are the patterns of co-occurrence of these factors?
3. What evidence exists on the safety and effectiveness of interventions for violence?
4. Where evidence of safety and effectiveness exists, are there other outcomes beyond reducing violence? If so, what is known about effectiveness by age, sex, and race/ethnicity?
5. What are the commonalities among interventions that are effective, and those that are ineffective?
6. What are priorities for future research?

Behavioral Change Knowledge Base Not Reflected In Violence Prevention Efforts

In its consensus statement, the panel recognized that “great advances have already been made within the violence prevention research field.” The statement highlights that to date, there has been “minimal incorporation of new developments in our understanding of the human genome and human brain development into the field of violence prevention.” It also recognized that despite what “has been learned over the past decade about understanding behavior and behavioral change in differing ethnic and cultural groups; this growing knowledge base currently does not appear to be reflected in many violence prevention efforts.” Additionally, the panel emphasized that the “substantial evidence” from other fields along with the growing body of evidence within the field of violence prevention “speak to the need to examine possible adverse effects as well as beneficial ones.”

The statement further stressed that “even within the field of violence prevention, the extent to which the interventions have been based on significant epidemiologic and behavioral finds within the field remains opaque.”

The panel emphasized that responding to the recommendations within the report will require the development of interdisciplinary investigative methods and innovative transdisciplinary interventions. Accordingly, “such a response will require realignment of funding sources for both research and for implementation of effective programs.”

The panel identified eleven areas as priorities for the future:

1. The development of a research agenda that shows whether reductions in proxy measures (e.g., physical aggression, delinquency) reliably translate into reductions in actual violence.
2. Federal agencies concerned with violence (Departments of Health and Human Services, Labor, Justice, Education) should jointly convene a meeting of leading investigators with the aim of achieving consensus regarding taxonomy for violent behavior and minimal collection and reporting of standardized data.
3. The Federal Government should establish a population-based registry of adolescent violence modeled on the National Cancer Institute’s Surveillance, Epidemiology, and End Results (SEER) program.
4. In order to broaden and widen the horizons of research, Federal agencies, private foundations, and universities should increase the diversity of students in research training programs.
5. Given the role of neighborhood and community in protecting against or generating antisocial behavior, there is an urgent need for research directed at changing neighborhoods to enhance their role in protecting young people.
6. More long-term cohort studies that measure a rich set of risk factors (from the individual to the contextual level) in diverse populations and that are analyzed using state-of-the-art qualitative and statistical methods are needed to untangle the dynamics of the co-occurrences of risk factors. Potential biologic markers should also be explored.
7. Systematic procedures for adapting established intervention protocols need to be developed for diverse communities with special attention to race, ethnicity, culture, and immigrant status (e.g. language issues).
8. Across-program component analysis should be carried out to develop a more rigorous understanding of the mechanisms that underlie successful and unsuccessful interventions.
9. More research on the gendered aspect of violence is needed. In particular, research targeting women, given the growing percentage of women in violence.
10. Programs should be evaluated in different contexts to be sure that aspects of successful demonstration programs have external validity.
11. More dissemination research is needed so that programs that work can be implemented more effectively in community settings. Successful programs need to be monitored in an ongoing fashion to ensure their effects are maintained as circumstances change over time.

The full text of the panel’s statement and a videocast of the conference can be viewed at <http://consensus.nih.gov>.

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The Consortium of Social Science Associations (COSSA), an advocacy organization for Federal support for the social and behavioral sciences, was founded in 1981 and stands alone in Washington in representing the full range of social and behavioral sciences.

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NEW COSSA MEMBER

COSSA is pleased to announce the addition of its newest member, John Jay College of Criminal Justice, City University of New York (CUNY). We look forward to working with the members of this institution to further social and behavioral science research in the 109th Congress and beyond.

MATILDA WHITE RILEY DIES; LED BEHAVIORAL/SOCIAL PROGRAM AT NIA

Matilda White Riley, renowned sociologist who developed the Behavioral and Social Research program at the National Institute on Aging (NIA), died in Maine on November 14 at 92 years old.

Riley, who shared an extraordinary 70-year professional and personal life with her late husband Jack, joined NIA in 1979 at the age of 68. For many years, she helped support social/behavioral scientists working on the research frontiers of the social and psychological aspects of aging as well as aging and social change.

In her early career, Riley was vice president and research director of Market Research Corporation of America and served as the chief consulting economist for the War Production Board during World War II. She entered academia in 1950, accepting an appointment from Rutgers University, where she taught until retiring in 1973. Riley then joined the faculty at Bowdoin College, where the building housing the Sociology-Anthropology department is named after her.

A member of the National Academy of Sciences, Riley served as president of the American Sociological Association, the Eastern Sociological Society, and in leadership positions of the American Association for Public Opinion Research, the AAAS, and the Gerontological Society of America. In 2001, NIH organized a lecture series in her honor entitled "Soaring: An Exploration of Science and the Life Course."

In addition to all these attributes, she was a great friend to COSSA and the social/behavioral sciences, and will be sorely missed.

Consortium of Social Science Associations

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