



COSSA Washington Update

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SPENDING BILLS PROCEED AS CONGRESS NEARS JULY 4 RECESS

The House continued its march toward finishing the FY 2006 spending bills by the July 4th recess. Only two bills are left on the agenda. This past fortnight also saw the Senate moving swiftly forward on its appropriations agenda. The goal is to have all of the bills through the committee process by the end of July. As of June 26, five are done. But the limitations on domestic spending that the appropriators are working with have necessitated difficult decisions involving trade-offs among programs.

NSF SURVIVES ATTEMPT TO REDUCE FUNDING IN HOUSE

On June 16, by a vote of 418-7, the House passed the FY 2006 Science, State, Justice and Commerce appropriations bill, which includes funding for the National Science Foundation (NSF). During debate on the House floor, NSF survived an attempt by Rep. Anthony Weiner (D-NY) to reduce its Research and Related Activities account by \$147 million in order to boost funding for the Community Oriented Police program. Weiner's amendment failed 31-396, with key NSF allies, Reps. Frank Wolf (R-VA),

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HOUSE OVERTURNS PEER REVIEW, ACCEPTS GRANT DEFUNDING AMENDMENT

The House passed the FY 2006 Labor, Health and Human Services, Education appropriations bill on June 24, which includes funding for the National Institutes of Health (NIH), by a vote of 250-151. As he did last year, Rep. Randy Neugebauer (R-TX) offered an amendment to strip funding from two grants supported by the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH). The grants, one at the University of Iowa and the other at the University of Buffalo, State University of New York, did not conform with Neugebauer's determination that NIMH's primary responsibility is to fund research to find cures for serious mental illness. Neugebauer's amendment was accepted as part of a bloc of amendments adopted with very little debate or a specific vote as the House rushed to escape Washington on a Friday afternoon.

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NSF (Continued from Page 1)

David Obey (D-WI), Alan Mollohan (D-WV), Vern Ehlers (R-MI), Sherwood Boehlert (R-NY), and John Culberson (R-TX) speaking about the importance of the research supported by the Foundation.

The Senate Commerce, Justice, and State Appropriations Subcommittee, chaired by Senator Richard Shelby (R-AL), marked up its FY 2006 spending bill on June 21. It allocated \$5.531 billion for NSF, only \$58 million above last year's funding level, \$74 million below the President's request, and almost \$113 million below the House. The full Senate appropriations committee accepted the Subcommittee's actions on June 23.

For the Research and Related Activities Account, which funds the research directorates, including the directorate for the Social, Behavioral and Economic Sciences, the Senate panel provided \$4.345 billion. This is \$124.7 million above last year, \$12 million above the request, but \$33 million below the House. The Committee report includes language noting the NSF priority in Human and Social Dynamics and funding it at the requested level of \$39.45 million.

The Senate panel provided only \$747 million for the Education and Human Resources Directorate. This is \$94 million below FY 2005 levels, \$60 million below the House, but \$10 million above the President's request. Unlike the House, which accepted the Administration's plan to have the Math and Science Partnership program exist only within the Department of Education, the Senate Committee included \$64 million for the program, of which \$4 million is for new grants.

AMENDMENT (Continued from Page 1)

Rep. Jim Leach (R-IA), however, expressed his "great disappointment that the committee has agreed to accept... the Neugebauer amendment which represents a philosophical assault on the peer review process that serves as a hallowed barrier to scientific censorship... This is a slippery slope that I hope conferees will not slide down," said Leach.

Neugebauer's amendment reflects a continuing major debate on the mission of NIMH. The two grants he sought to defund are part of a basic research mission at NIMH that has come under attack by the National Alliance for the Mentally Ill and other patient advocacy groups during the past few years. The Iowa project

involved the study of how pigeons react to visual stimuli. Easily ridiculed by Neugebauer and his allies, the study may help improve understanding of disorders in humans like schizophrenia and autism that involve abnormal perception. The Buffalo project studies how couples perceive and maintain their marriages. The importance of this study is underlined in recent Wall Street Journal articles about healthy marriages and good health, as well as in the Bush administration's push, through its Healthy Marriage Initiative, to have couples, particularly low-income ones, tie the knot.

Anticipating a debate on Neugebauer's amendment, NIH Director Elias Zerhouni issued the following statement: "Defunding meritorious grants on the floor of Congress is unjustified scientific censorship. It undermines the historical strength of American science which based on our world renowned, apolitical and transparent peer review process."

Despite yeoman work by the Coalition to Protect Research (CPR), led by Angela Sharpe of COSSA and Karen Studwell of the American Psychological Association (APA), and its allies in the Biomedical and Higher Education community, the House appropriations leadership did not want to take the risk of putting the House on record as supporting the overturning of the peer review process and thus, did not bring the amendment to a roll call vote.

Last year, Neugebauer offered a similar amendment that was accepted by the House. However, the Senate refused to go along, and the grant defunding was removed during conference and did not appear in the final FY 2005 appropriations bill.

The en bloc amendments also included an amendment by Rep. Henry Waxman (D-CA) that prohibits "the Department of Health and Human Services from using political litmus tests in making appointments to scientific advisory committees." The amendment was endorsed by the National Academy of Sciences, the American Academy for the Advancement of Science, and numerous other scientific organizations. "Expert advisory panels should be filled with scientific experts, not party loyalists," Waxman argued in his remarks accompanying the amendment. He urged his colleagues not to "undermine the historical strength of American science."

CENSUS FACES DIFFICULTIES IF SPENDING DECISIONS HOLD

As part of the same Science, State, Justice, and Commerce spending bill, the U.S. Census Bureau also saw its funding reduced by amendment on the House floor. This situation was exacerbated when the Senate subcommittee, chaired by Sen. Shelby (R-AL), provided its allocations.

Rep. Brian Baird (D-WA), concerned by the increased production and use of metamphetamine in this country, sponsored an amendment that boosted funding by \$20 million to cope with this problem. To offset the increase, he took \$20 million from the FY 2006 Census Bureau's appropriation; \$10 million from the 2010 planning account, and \$10 million from the Salaries and Expenses account.

Reps. Frank Wolf (R-VA), Alan Mollohan (D-WV), Michael Turner (R-OH), and Carolyn Maloney (D-NY) spoke in opposition to the amendment. Baird decried the Census Bureau's waste of money "buying paperweights, calendars, buttons, pins, all sorts of stuff" that were given out in 2000 to boost awareness so that people would respond to the Census forms. In the end, Baird won by a vote of 260-168.

The Senate panel made things worse. For the Salaries and Expenses account, which funds most of the non-decennial surveys of the nation's economy and its demographic characteristics, the Senate committee provided \$183 million, a reduction of \$13 million from the FY 2005 level, \$37 million below the request, and \$25 million below the House.

For the Periodic Censuses and Programs account, which includes funding to plan the 2010 Census and the American Community Survey (ACS), the Senate panel allocated \$544.4 million, \$4 million less than last year, \$113 million below the request, and \$80 million below the House. This comes at a point when the Bureau needs significant increases to prepare for the decennial census and increase ACS coverage. The ACS had hoped to add group quarters, such as nursing homes, college dorms, military barracks, and prisons to the survey. The \$144 million FY 2006 appropriation proposed by the Senate, roughly the same as last year, will preclude that.

The decrease in funding for 2010 planning would make it difficult to carry out the testing of the redesigned, short-form-only Census, scheduled for

Travis County, Texas and on the Cheyenne Indian Reservation in South Carolina.

The Senate panel provided a considerable boost to the National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), which had been cut significantly by the President and the House. It also needed funds to allocate more money than President Bush had proposed for State and Local Law Enforcement Assistance. The Census Bureau became a victim of these trade-offs.

JUSTICE RESEARCH AND STATISTICS SENATE FUNDING

The Senate committee provided \$54 million for base funding of the National Institute of Justice (NIJ) in FY 2006, down slightly from FY 2005. The House appropriated \$56 million. The Senate panel designated \$10 million for social science research, the same as last year. NIJ will also continue to receive funding from the Violence Against Women program, the State and Local Justice Assistance programs, and the DNA Initiative.

The Senate committee allocated only \$89 million for the DNA Initiative, as opposed to the \$177.1 million recommended by the House, which was also the Administration's request. Citing a Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS) Census of Publicly Funded Forensic Crime Laboratories and an NIJ report entitled, "Status and Needs of Forensic Science Services: A Report to Congress," the Senate Committee suggested that the problem entails more than just a DNA backlog. It therefore directed the National Academy of Sciences to create an independent Forensic Sciences Committee and provided it \$1.5 million to produce a report by June 1, 2006 that would "assess the present and future resource needs of the forensic science community" and recommend ways to maximize "the use of forensic technologies and techniques to solve crimes, investigate death and protect the public."

For the BJS, the Senate Committee appropriated \$34.1 million, about one-half million dollars more than last year. The Committee report does not comment on BJS's activities or funding, except what was noted above.

COSSA RECEPTION WELCOMES THE TWO DAVIDS

The Consortium hosted a reception on June 16 to officially welcome David Lightfoot and David Abrams to their new positions of leadership for the social and behavioral sciences at the National Science Foundation (NSF) and the National Institutes of Health (NIH).

Lightfoot, former Dean of the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences at Georgetown, became the Assistant Director for NSF's Social, Behavioral, and Economic Sciences Directorate (SBE) on June 1. In brief remarks at the reception, Lightfoot spoke about his background as a linguist as well as the challenges facing NSF and the SBE sciences in this era of constrained resources. He also noted his hope to enhance the NSF priority in Human and Social Dynamics.

Abrams, previously the director of Behavioral Medicine Research at Brown, took over as head of NIH's Office of Behavioral and Social Sciences Research (OBSSR) on April 1. He expressed his hope that the importance of relating behavioral issues to health would continue to remain a key part of NIH's agenda. He extended thanks to those who have helped to establish and support the mission of OBSSR, including Norman Anderson, OBSSR's first director, now CEO of the American Psychological Association and a guest at the reception. Abrams explained that "this has helped put behavioral and social sciences (BSSR) on the map. Thus, standing on the shoulders of giants will allow us to see a little further." He underscored that though OBSSR is more established now, there is still much that can be done to further basic and applied social and behavioral science research.

Abrams joined Lightfoot in saying that they eagerly anticipate working with COSSA members to further the agenda of the social and behavioral sciences in the years to come.

The reception, held at the Heldref Foundation in downtown Washington, D.C., also honored Wanda Ward for her fourteen months as Acting Assistant Director for SBE. NSF Director Arden Bement joined many people from NSF, NIH and COSSA in attendance.

For further information about the backgrounds of Lightfoot and Abrams, see *UPDATE*, February 7, 2005 (Lightfoot) and December 13, 2004 (Abrams).

COSSA AND AAG PRESENT GIS BRIEFING ON CAPITOL HILL

With the increasing need for better knowledge about geographic information systems (GIS) for homeland security, local governments, and emergency preparedness, COSSA joined with the Association of American Geographers (AAG) to present a Congressional Briefing entitled, "Building Geographic Management Systems: Tackling Critical Policy Needs for the Nation's Future" on June 14.

AAG Executive Director Douglas Richardson began the briefing by giving an overview of the current need for geographic management systems, or GMS. As Richardson explained, GIS is "a computerized way of making maps, which stores lots and lots of layers of data and map layers, as well as all sorts of what we call attribute data, or detailed information about all of these features like a street or a telephone pole or a moving tank that one wants to store." GMS, on the other hand, is the integration of technologies such as GIS and global positioning systems (GPS) in order to get a more comprehensive way to monitor, map, and model activities across the globe. Richardson explained that further developing this type of capability is "extraordinarily powerful."

In addition, he emphasized, the U.S. Department of Labor has recognized the field of geo-technology as one of the three most emerging and evolving fields next to nanotechnology and biotechnology. "Job opportunities are growing and diversifying in geospatial technologies, proving their value in ever-more areas... this is a very important, exploding new field, one that universities are getting behind, one the private sector is getting behind," Richardson added. He expressed hope that there will eventually be an increased need for a deeper pool of skilled professionals in geo-technology on the local and national levels.

While Richardson conveyed that difficult issues such as locational privacy will be brought to the forefront with the increasing emergence and evolution of this field, researchers and practitioners should take this as a challenge to confront "head on." He explained, "... we need to put in place regulatory systems just like we have for every other type of technology that allows us to move forward and utilize the benefits of those technologies without finding ourselves enmeshed in controversy over other issues."

Wachter: “We Need GIS and GSM Leaders”

Susan Wachter, the Richard B. Worley professor of financial management and professor of real estate and finance at the Wharton School at the University of Pennsylvania, spoke about the importance of, need for, and future of spatial intelligence in a globalized world. She emphasized the increasing need for businesses to use geospatial intelligence in seeking the best locations, but also noted that it is becoming increasingly more common for local governments to use geospatial elements for similar purposes.

Wachter pointed out three of the main ways in which localities use GIS and GMS. The first purpose is tracking. Local governments can now keep track of addresses in large part because the private sector has made these capabilities cheaper and easier to use. Second, localities can optimize local decision making. Wachter illustrated this by talking about assessing property taxes; governments can use technology to track properties as well as to automate and streamline their processes. She added, “...using automated evaluation models, you can have fair taxation that’s effective at a miniscule percentage of [the current] cost...” The third main use of these systems in local government is to do long-range scenario planning that can project the best places to invest assets. This can be critical in emergency preparedness, environmental protection, and maximizing property value. In terms of emergency preparedness, she emphasized, we cannot limit ourselves to thinking about assets only within our own municipalities: “The key point to make here is that you can’t geo-fence high-risk assets and stop at your own border. This is going to require cooperation across localities, and partnerships.”

Wachter closed her discussion by arguing that there is “a lack of managerial leadership to manage the entire process, including the education across the entire ladder of skills. We need GIS and GSM leaders.”

GIS the “Best Tool Available,” But More Communication Needed

The next speaker was Akhlaque Haque, an associate professor of government and director of graduate studies in public administration at the University of Alabama at Birmingham, who shifted the discussion more toward GMS and local government decision-making. He opened his discussion by citing a 2003 study performed by Public Technology Incorporated that found that 97 percent of local governments were using GIS,

including 88 percent of local communities with populations between 50,000 and 100,000 people. Haque gave several examples of local government agencies in Jefferson County, Alabama who have been successfully using GIS to run sarin gas simulation models, flood prediction maps, community emergency awareness models, traffic congestion, meeting federal school district requirements, tax appraisal and assessment, planning, and zoning. “GIS gives life to local government policy planning and implementation. There is no question that this is a very useful tactical tool, and there is no choice but to use it for policy implementation. For accountability and oversight, monitoring and surveillance – this is the best tool available so far,” Haque concluded.

He argued that the “art” of GIS decision-making must be balanced with adequate communication; though many neighboring local governments have advanced technology, they cannot harness the decision-making potential without established lines of communication. He added: “The federal government must take the lead in promoting GIS and providing incentive to integrate GIS operations...”

Users Evolving, But More Skilled Workers Are Needed

The final speaker of the day was David Cowen, chair of the department of geography, co-director of the NASA Affiliated Research Center in South Carolina, and distinguished professor of geography at the University of South Carolina. Cowen discussed the evolution of users and needs for GIS. He pointed out that, “In the old days we talked about managers using... chauffeur-driven GIS... You know, here, do this for me and bring me that analysis.” He added: “Well, that is not what managers want now just as they don’t want somebody to send them an accounting sheet. They want the actual spreadsheet and they want to do their analysis themselves.” Cowen explained that these new user needs are forcing researchers to create not only a more robust research

✎ CORRECTION ✎

In the Volume 24, Issue 11 edition of *UPDATE*, dated June 11, 2005, the article entitled “Capitol Hill: Scientists Discuss ‘Six Degrees of Separation’” incorrectly read that the wave one data of the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health indicated dense “core” networks of high-risk youth interacting with one another as well as “romantic cascade” networks. The study only found that “romantic cascade” networks were present. COSSA apologizes and regrets the error.

program, but also ways to use the technology in a more pragmatic way for entities like local governments.

As with the other speakers, Cowen addressed the important need to expand the skill pool for GIS: “We have to be more creative about this. We have to look at ways that we can use the Internet and other ways to deliver this technology and the training to a group of people that don’t have their hands on it.” He went on to add that in South Carolina, by the year 2010, all surveyors have to have a four-year degree. However, there isn’t any place in the state where they can get a four-year degree. In addition, geography and affiliated departments in four-year universities and community colleges have not coordinated enough to agree on a set of acceptable and transferable credits. In addition, he argued that “... we need to find new ways of training people outside of the traditional four-year programs.” He praised the Institute for Advanced Education in Geospatial Science at the University of Mississippi for developing modules and online coursework for geospatial studies students.

Cowen wrapped up his presentation by talking about the newest technologies that can be of use to local decision-makers, like LIDAR, a laser-range finding sensor that sends out laser beam pulses to map things like elevation. This, for example, helps railroads find the least costly and difficult routes, he explained. But too many barriers continue to exist in sharing the data between agencies, he argued, and data must often be replicated in order for everyone to use it.

During the question and answer period, one attendee asked if the presenters were optimistic about higher funding recommendations for GIS and GMS in light of the fact that overall numbers for agencies like NASA are seeing a gradual decrease. Richardson responded that he remained optimistic because GIS and GMS have such critical uses for homeland security purposes. Another attendee asked Richardson, “how are you going to build capacity at colleges and universities that don’t even have geography programs, but are charting these programs in homeland security and all these other areas?” Richardson explained: “We’re very happy to support anyone and everyone who has any interest at all in the field. A lot of our members are economists; they’re sociologists; they’re people from other disciplines who have an interest in geography. They don’t have to have degrees in geography in order to have programs.” He pointed out that geography is “a field a bit like history. We cover the spatial analysis and history covers the temporal analysis. So we’re happy to extend hands and work with everyone and try to be supportive there.”

Another briefing attendee from the U.S. Census Bureau asked how best to create regional cooperation across local governments who have few or no incentives to share information with neighboring areas. Wachter argued that in some cases, the federal government must step in. “I’m all for local governance. Decisions ought to be at the local level. But information should be in a form that can be shared... that’s where the federal government can step in,” she explained.

SCIENCE GROUP HOLDS EXHIBITION

The Coalition for National Science Funding (CNSF) held its 12th annual exhibition on June 21. Thirty-two scientific societies and universities brought scientists and students to Washington, D.C. to display their NSF-supported research and training activities. Attended by close to 400 people, including 15 Members of Congress, the event provided an opportunity to demonstrate how NSF funding is used to foster scientific achievement and train the next generation of scientists.

COSSA was a co-sponsor of the event and COSSA members — the American Psychological Association (APA), American Sociological Association (ASA), and American Educational Research Association (AERA) — exhibited. ASA brought NSF’s Alan Waterman Award winner, NYU sociologist Dalton Conley, back to Washington to present his research on *Assets and Black-White Inequality*. APA brought Sujeeta Bhatt of Georgetown University Medical Center to exhibit her work on *Catching Spies: Psychological Science and fMRI*. Nancy Songer of the University of Michigan School of Education represented AERA and demonstrated her work on *Kids As Working Scientists*. In addition, the Federation of Behavioral, Psychological and Cognitive Sciences brought Sheena Sethi-Iyengar from Columbia University to display *The Psychological Costs of Ever Increasing Choice: When Too Many Options Lead to Suboptimal Retirement Savings Decisions*.

CNSF is an alliance of over 100 organizations united by a concern for the future vitality of the national science, mathematics, and engineering enterprise. CNSF supports the goal of increasing the national investment in the National Science Foundation’s research and education programs in response to the unprecedented scientific, technological, and economic opportunities facing the United States. Sam Rankin of the American Mathematical Society is CNSF’s current chair. COSSA Executive Director Howard Silver chaired the Coalition from 1994-2000.

SOURCES OF RESEARCH SUPPORT

COSSA provides this information as a service and encourages readers to contact the sponsoring agency for further information. Additional application guidelines and restrictions may apply.

NIEHS Strategic Plan 2000

The National Institutes of Environmental Health Sciences (NIEHS) is seeking input from the scientific community and the public in updating its 2000 strategic plan, "NIEHS Strategic Plan 2000 – A Five Year Program New Opportunities in Environmental Health Research."

NIEHS' mission is reduce the burden of environmentally-associated disease and dysfunction by defining (1) how environmental exposures affect our health, (2) how individuals differ in their susceptibility to these exposures, and (3) how these susceptibilities change over time.

According to newly-appointed NIEHS Director David Schwartz, "Almost every complex disease, from diabetes, to obesity and heart disease, to many cancers, is, in part, caused by exposures to the environment. NIEHS is uniquely poised to improve the health of this nation. We are not limited to any one organ, system or disease – we can use the breadth of our knowledge on environmental exposures to understand and intervene in the disease process."

The strategy is expected to focus on four elements: basic research, human health and disease, global environmental health, and training. Having these four areas serve as our backbone will allow us to strategically focus on funding the best science that will have the greatest impact on human health," says Schwartz.

The goal of this strategic planning process is to identify barriers to progress for future research and define future needs and directions for environmental health. The Institute is also seeking the nomination of individuals qualified to participate in a workshop designed to discuss the plan in detail.

Respondents are asked to consider the following questions in the submitting comments on the plan:

- What are the disease processes and public health concerns that are relevant to environmental health sciences?
- How can environmental health sciences be used to understand how biological systems work, why some individuals are more susceptible to disease, or why individuals with the same disease may have a very different clinical outcome?
- What are the major opportunities and challenges in global environmental health?
- What are the environmental exposures that need further consideration?
- What are the critical needs for training the next generation of scientists in environmental health?
- What technology and infrastructure changes are needed to fundamentally advance environmental health science?

The existing strategic plan can be viewed at <http://www.niehs.nih.gov/external/plan2000/home.htm>. Submit comments and/or nominations to the NIEHS Office of Science Policy and Planning on or before August 5, 2005. Comments may be submitted electronically at the NIEHS Strategic Planning web site: www.niehs.nih.gov/external/plan2006/home.htm.

Nominations should include the name, degree(s), position title, department, institution name and address, phone and fax numbers, email address, and specific areas of expertise.

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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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