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CONSORTIUM OF SOCIAL SCIENCE ASSOCIATIONS

# COSSA WASHINGTON UPDATE

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## HOUSE, SENATE AUTHORIZATION COMMITTEES GENEROUS TO NSF

In a lengthy and spirited authorization bill markup, the House Science, Space, and Technology Committee, chaired by Rep. Robert Roe (D-NJ), recommended adding \$85 million to the administration's FY 1989 budget request of \$2.05 billion for the National Science Foundation (NSF). This increase, proposed at the April 21 markup, would be used to inaugurate a research facilities program. The committee recommended funding the Biological, Behavioral, and Social Sciences Directorate (BBS) at the full administration request of \$289 million. The committee also voted to divide the administration's proposed \$150 million line item for the Science and Technology (S&T) Centers among three separate categories. The House bill would cover two years, with funding in FY 1990 authorized to a maximum of \$2.2 billion.

The largest of the three categories into which S&T funding has been placed for FY 1989 is "discretionary." Rep. Doug Walgren (D-PA), chairman of the Science, Research, and Technology Subcommittee, told the committee that NSF has the option of applying any or all of the \$116 million designated for this category to its proposed S&T Centers program. Of the \$34 million remaining in the administration's original S&T Centers proposal,

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The Consortium 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.

Victor G. Rosenblum, *President*

Howard J. Silver, *Acting Executive Director*

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\$14 million would be added to the Science and Engineering Education Directorate's request of \$156 million and \$20 million to the \$56 million requested for advanced scientific computing.

At both this markup and an April 19 markup conducted by Walgren's subcommittee debate was partisan, with some Republican members expressing outrage at the notion of adding \$85 million to an administration request that would already afford NSF a 19% funding increase. Opponents of Walgren's proposal included Rep. Sherwood Boehlert (R-NY), the ranking Republican on the subcommittee, who tried unsuccessfully to block it with an amendment that would have set an S&T line item at \$30 million (or one-fifth of the administration's S&T proposal, which was intended to be spread out over the course of five years). Like Walgren's plan, Boehlert's amendment provided \$85 million for facilities improvements, but rather than adding to the administration's request, this money would come out of Walgren's \$116 million discretionary pot, which Boehlert criticized as being "a lot of discretion." Boehlert's amendment failed by a vote of 9 to 7 in the subcommittee and then 27 to 20 in the full committee. Final House committee action on the NSF reauthorization bill was delayed pending further debate on a surprise amendment, introduced by Rep. Robert Walker (R-PA), which would prohibit NSF from granting funds to institutions unable to certify that they operate a drug-free workplace.

The acrimonious debates notwithstanding, some committee members conceded that when the NSF budget request is acted on by the appropriations committees, anything could happen. Some doubted whether the authorizing committee's recommendations would have any impact, particularly in light of last year's debacle, when it recommended the administration's FY 1988 increase of 17% for NSF, only to see it slashed to 6% in the final appropriation.

In the Senate, the Commerce, Science, and Transportation Committee, chaired by Sen. Ernest Hollings (D-SC), approved a five-year NSF authorization without changing the bottom line for FY 1989. As in the House, NSF's biological, behavioral, and social sciences received the requested amount. However, the committee passed an amendment introduced by Hollings to realign funds originally intended for the S&T Centers. This realignment resembled Rep. Boehlert's failed House amendment by reducing the requested \$150 million S&T allocation to \$30 million. Of the remaining \$120 million, the Senate markup allocates: \$40 million to be spread among various existing programs; \$30 million for NSF undergraduate programs; and \$50 million for a facilities program. Under an agreement with the Labor and Human Resources Committee, the Commerce Committee has no jurisdiction over the Science and Engineering Education Directorate. It is expected that the Labor Committee will add funds to that line when it deals with the authorization.<<



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**COSSA TESTIMONY SUPPORTS NSF BUDGET INCREASE**

On April 27, COSSA acting executive director Howard J. Silver appeared before the House HUD-Independent Agencies Appropriations Subcommittee, chaired by Rep. Edward Boland (D-MA), to support the proposed \$333 million (19%) increase for the National Science Foundation in FY 1989.

Silver advocated the requested 10% increase for Research and Related Activities, pointing out that funding for this basic core function of NSF has remained relatively flat in real terms since 1985. Citing the recent National Research Council (NRC) report, The Behavioral and Social Sciences: Achievements and Opportunities (which calls for an increased federal investment of \$240 million), and noting the 25% decline in federal support for social and behavioral sciences over the past 15 years compared to a 36% increase of federal support in constant dollars for other fields of scientific research, he also urged the subcommittee to augment the funding for social and behavioral science research at NSF.

In addition to the research opportunities chronicled in the NRC report, COSSA's testimony noted the NSF initiatives in decision, risk, and management science, geographic information and analysis, global change, neurobiology of learning and memory, and organizational effectiveness. Silver argued that full funding for research was necessary to enable researchers to meet the challenges in these areas, without sacrificing support for other individual-investigator initiated projects and the multi-user, multidisciplinary social science data bases funded by NSF.

COSSA also supported increased funding for the new Studies in Science, Technology, and Society program and the requested 12% increase for the Science and Engineering Education Directorate. It was clear from the comments of Rep. William Green (R-NY), the Ranking Republican on the subcommittee, that funding for science education will be enlarged above the requested increase when the appropriations bill is marked up. The questions are, by how much, and where will the extra funds come from? Will the research budget be squeezed again as it was last year? The subcommittee is expected to mark up its bill sometime in May.<<

**RURAL RESEARCH INITIATIVE SUPPORTED BY COSSA TESTIMONY**

Asserting that "sound research information is vital to developing effective policy," William D. Heffernan, professor of rural sociology at the University of Missouri, testified on behalf of COSSA to the House and Senate Agricultural Appropriations subcommittees on April 18 and April 26. Heffernan, current president of the Rural Sociological Society (RSS), asked the subcommittees to allocate \$13 million to the Cooperative State Research Service of the Agriculture Department for research on family and community well-being in rural areas.

Working with Agricultural Experiment Station directors, the RSS has developed a significant initiative for support of social



science research in rural America. This initiative is based on the argument, made by Heffernan in his testimony, that many of the problems faced by rural communities cannot be solved with farm policy (see related story in Update, April 1, 1988). He noted: "Even if the economic base of agriculture could be improved dramatically, it would not significantly assist most rural communities in improving their ability to provide adequate services and an environment in which rural communities can prosper." Thus, the need for a solid research data base and good descriptive data to develop new and creative programs to revitalize rural America is great.

Heffernan presented the subcommittees with researchable issues on rural development identified by social scientists, as well as examples of where research had provided programs to alleviate the suffering of farm families caught in the rural crisis of the 1980s. Sen. Quentin Burdick (D-ND), chairman of the subcommittee in the Senate, inquired about the evaluation efforts of those programs and Heffernan indicated that several surveys are being conducted which will report by July 1. Sen. Charles Grassley (R-IA), who also attended the hearing, expressed general support for the testimony. Rep. Jaime Whitten (D-MS), chairman of the House subcommittee, suggested rural communities suffered greatly from the end of general revenue sharing. The effort to secure funds for social science research will continue with lobbying of the appropriations committees over the next few months.<<

#### EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH AND IMPROVEMENT OFFICE DISSECTED

With occasional references to the "checkered" career of federal education research to enliven the proceedings, the Select Education Subcommittee of the House Committee on Education and Labor conducted oversight hearings on the Department of Education's Office of Educational Research and Improvement (OERI) April 20-21. The hearings, chaired by Rep. Major Owens (D-NY), were convened as a preliminary stage in the reauthorization of OERI. Bureaucrats, researchers, teachers, and trade unionists testified to why educational research appears to be all but ignored by the federal government.

In his opening statement, Owens decried the poverty of federal educational research in the U.S., finding in it a suitable metaphor for what he claimed was the administration's general inattention to research and development. Owens noted more than once the disparity between the government's small commitment to civilian R&D and the huge sums (proportionally as well as absolutely) expended on R&D by businesses. The chairman also lamented the sharp contrast between defense R&D (which he estimated at \$42.6 billion in FY 1988) and educational research (\$128 million).

The star witness was Assistant Secretary for OERI Chester ("Checker") Finn, who agreed in principle that educational research has been neglected and offered suggestions to improve the situation at the federal level. His main suggestion was to



redistribute OERI funding within the agency. Data on the distribution of university research support within federal agencies in FY 1984 show that while 90% of OERI's research funds went to education centers and laboratories, other agencies favored individual projects (nearly 70% in the National Institutes of Health and over 80% in the National Science Foundation, for example). The money spent on education labs is, in Finn's eyes, being wasted; it is, he asserted, "a profligate use of OERI funds in relation to the benefit they generate." He was not as critical of the OERI centers, but nonetheless called for greater overall programmatic flexibility, including increased funding for field-initiated research, to balance the OERI research portfolio and ensure greater returns on the federal investment in educational research.

Other witnesses addressed the cost-benefit theme, including Denis Doyle, former member of the COSSA board of directors and currently senior fellow at the Hudson Institute. Doyle spoke to the direct relation between research and improvement, noting the paradox of a revival of the ethos of competitiveness accompanied by unmet research needs in the vital area of improving human capital through education. James Coleman, research associate at NORC, related the sorry tale of low academic achievement by students in the U.S. relative to those of other countries. This problem meant, for Coleman, that if there is to be an agenda for future educational research it must focus on "Why are we, compared to other countries, now preparing our children so poorly with the skills that will give them a productive adult life?"

Various suggestions were put forward for improving the performance of educational research in the U.S. The need for an agenda or "vision" was raised by Nancy Cole, dean of the College of Education at the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign, who was testifying as president of the American Educational Research Association. What is desperately needed is a "research structure" encompassing training, research, and liaison between researchers and practitioners. Acknowledging that this would be expensive, Cole noted that increased funding is required to release educational research from its "poverty bind."

A single theme emerged from the myriad of viewpoints presented over the two days of testimony: educational research has been underfunded to the detriment of the educational system. While the impact of research may not be immediate, its results pay handsome dividends over the long-term. Only greater investment in field-initiated research as well as research labs and centers can insure the continued vitality of educational research in the U.S. Rep. Owens, noting current demands for education reform, promised a full report on the proceedings with recommendations for future reforms. Several options were suggested at the hearing, ranging from strengthening the existing system to completely overhauling it. It is the latter which is most likely to appeal to Owens: he proposed, following a New York Times editorial, creating a quango (a semi-autonomous, nongovernmental agency cooperating with the public and private sectors) for educational research.<<



**PEACE INSTITUTE TAKES ITS OWN BUDGET TO CONGRESS**

The United States Institute of Peace (USIP) is taking advantage of its special status as an agency independent of the executive branch. While the majority of other federal agencies must echo the administration's request for their budgets when they go before Congress, USIP can--and has--devised its own.

The administration set the agency's request at \$3.4 million for FY 1989, enough, it said, to "permit USIP to continue its programs at levels consistent with current program planning and administrative experience." Noting that the administration's figure is one-third less than USIP's FY 1988 operating budget, Institute officials are asking Congress for \$8.6 million, more than half of which would be applied to grants, subsidies and contributions. The budget was submitted to the Senate Labor, HHS, Education, and Related Agencies Appropriations Subcommittee on April 15; it was presented to the corresponding House subcommittee on April 21.

This strategy is a slightly toned down version of last year's, when USIP sent Congress an FY 1988 budget request of \$10 million, while the administration request was \$3.3 million. After the House zero-funded the agency and the Senate recommended \$5 million, the conference committee set the final FY 1988 figure at \$4.3 million.

Language contained in the agency's FY 1989 budget request to Congress notes that "a significant portion of funds will continue to be reserved for unsolicited grant and fellowship proposals, but in addition a portion of the Grants Program for fiscal years 1988 and 1989 will be devoted to topics for which the Institute will develop the scope of work and then solicit applications." The agency requests \$3.6 million for its grant programs, and another \$828,000 for the Jennings Randolph Fellowship Program, which would allow the Institute to support 17 fellows.

Before any money can be appropriated for FY 1989, USIP must be reauthorized, a move that was urged by several witnesses who testified on April 27 at an oversight hearing of the House Postsecondary Education Subcommittee (Education and Labor Committee), chaired by Rep. Pat Williams (D-MT). One of the witnesses was Rep. Dan Glickman (D-KS), who testified that despite early skepticism, members of the USIP Board of Directors "have been diligent and careful; they invested themselves in the Institute's long-term success; and, as a result, they have set it on a steady, responsible, and imaginative course." He and other witnesses gave equally high marks to the Institute's new president, Samuel Lewis, who was selected by the Board last year (see Update, September 25, 1987).<<



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**SOURCES OF RESEARCH SUPPORT: DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES**

COSSA provides this information as a service, and encourages readers to contact the agency rather than COSSA for further information or application materials.

**National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism**

The National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism (NIAAA) is a component of the Alcohol, Drug Abuse, and Mental Health Administration. NIAAA supports basic and applied research aimed at reducing the incidence of and morbidity associated with alcohol abuse and alcoholism. The Prevention Research Branch of NIAAA's Division of Clinical and Prevention Research is soliciting grant applications for research on alcohol-related behavior that increases the risk of AIDS and/or research on prevention strategies to reduce that risk. This Request for Applications (RFA) has been issued to address an imbalance in current NIAAA-supported research on AIDS and alcohol, which has been biased toward biomedical aspects of AIDS treatment and prevention.

This RFA offers two research options: investigation of the underlying nature and dynamics of alcohol-related behavior that might increase the risk of contracting AIDS; or intervention research focused on developing and testing strategies to prevent alcohol-related behavior that can result in AIDS. This RFA is seeking applications using appropriate methodologies drawn from any discipline that can contribute to this area of prevention research. Research that targets black and Hispanic populations is particularly encouraged.

**Eligibility:** Applications are invited from any public or private for-profit or non-profit organization; women and minority investigators are particularly encouraged to apply.

**Budget:** Between \$500,000 and \$1 million will be made available for approximately 3 to 6 awards.

**Application Procedure:** Public Health Service research grant application form PHS 398 (revised 9/86) should be used.

**Funding Mechanism:** Initial grants of up to 5 years will be awarded and may be renewed for subsequent periods.

**Deadline:** May 25, 1988

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