



CONSORTIUM *of* SOCIAL SCIENCE ASSOCIATIONS

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Testimony in Support of Fiscal Year 2020 Funding for the
National Institutes of Health, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center
for Health Statistics, Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality, Bureau of Labor
Statistics, Institute of Education Sciences, and Department of Education International
Education and Foreign Language Programs

Prepared for the Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, Education and
Related Agencies, Committee on Appropriations, United States Senate
Submitted by Wendy Naus, Executive Director, Consortium of Social Science Associations

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On behalf of the Consortium of Social Science Associations (COSSA), I offer this written testimony for inclusion in the official committee record. For fiscal year (FY) 2020, COSSA urges the Committee to appropriate **\$41.6 billion for the National Institutes of Health (NIH); \$7.8 billion for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), including \$175 million for the National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS); \$460 million for the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ); \$655 million for the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS); \$670 million for the Institute of Education Sciences (IES); and \$106.1 million for the Department of Education's International Education and Foreign Language programs.**

First, allow me to thank the Committee for its long-standing, bipartisan support for scientific research. Strong, sustained funding for all U.S. science agencies is essential if we are to make progress toward improving the health and economic competitiveness of the nation. COSSA serves as a united voice for a broad, diverse network of organizations, institutions, communities, and stakeholders who care about a successful and vibrant social science research enterprise. We represent the collective interests of all STEM disciplines engaged in the rigorous study of why and how humans behave as they do as individuals, groups and within institutions, organizations, and society.

National Institutes of Health

COSSA joins the more than 300 stakeholder organizations in support of \$41.6 billion for the National Institutes of Health (NIH) in FY 2020. COSSA appreciates the Subcommittee's leadership and its long-standing bipartisan support of NIH, especially during difficult budgetary times. There are, however, ongoing and emerging health challenges confronting the United States and the world, which COSSA believes merits continued investment in the NIH. This funding level would enable real growth over biomedical inflation, an important step to ensuring stability in the U.S. research capacity over the long term.

To be truly transformative, NIH will need to continue to embrace research from a wide range of scientific disciplines, including the social and behavioral sciences. The **Office of Behavioral and Social Sciences Research (OBSSR)**, housed within the Office of the NIH Director, coordinates basic, clinical, and translational research in the behavioral and social sciences in support of the NIH mission, and co-funds highly rated grants in the behavioral and social sciences in partnership with individual institutes and centers. Unfortunately, OBSSR's budget has been held roughly flat for several years despite the sizable increases to the NIH budget. Knowledge about the behavioral influences on health is a crucial component in the nation's battles against the leading causes of morbidity and mortality, namely, obesity, heart disease, cancer, AIDS, diabetes, age-related illnesses, accidents, substance abuse, and mental illness. The fundamental understanding of how disease works, including the impact of social environment on disease processes, underpins our ability to conquer devastating illnesses. **We urge Congress to emphasize support for OBSSR and encourage NIH to increase the Office's budget in FY 2020.**

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

COSSA urges the Subcommittee to appropriate \$7.8 billion for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), including \$175 million for CDC's National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS). As the country's leading public health and health surveillance agency, the CDC works with state, local, and international partners to keep Americans safe and healthy. Social and behavioral science research plays a crucial role in helping the CDC carry out this mission by informing the CDC's behavioral surveillance systems, public health interventions, and health promotion and communication programs that help protect Americans and people around the world from disease. As the Department of Health and Human Services' principal statistical agency, NCHS produces data on all aspects of our health care system, including opioid and prescription drug use, maternal and infant mortality, chronic disease prevalence, health care disparities, emergency room use, health insurance coverage, teen pregnancy, and causes of death. As a result of the rising costs of conducting surveys and years of flat or near-flat funding, NCHS has had to focus nearly all of its resources on continuing to produce the high-quality data that communities across the country rely on to understand their health. Additional funding would allow NCHS to respond to rising costs, declining response rates, and an ever-more complex health care system and capitalize on opportunities surrounding advances in statistical methodology, big data, and computing to produce better information more quickly and efficiently, while reducing the reporting burden on local data providers.

Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality

COSSA urges the Subcommittee to appropriate \$460 million for the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ). This funding level would allow AHRQ to rebuild portfolios terminated as a result of years of past cuts and expand its research and training portfolio to address our nation's pressing and evolving health care challenges. Additionally, with a quarter of the agency's program level budget supported by the Patient-Centered Outcomes Research Trust Fund, a strong investment in the AHRQ appropriation will be essential to sustain the agency's core activities as the Trust Fund undergoes reauthorization this year. AHRQ funds research on improving the quality, safety, efficiency, and effectiveness of America's health care system. It is the only agency in the federal government with the expertise and explicit mission to fund research on improving health care at the provider level (i.e., in hospitals, medical practices, nursing homes, and other medical facilities). Its work is complementary—not duplicative—of other HHS agencies. COSSA urges the Committee to ensure robust support for AHRQ's critical health services research.

Bureau of Labor Statistics

COSSA urges the Subcommittee to appropriate \$655 million for the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) for its core programs. The Bureau of Labor Statistics produces economic data that are essential for evidence-based decision-making by businesses and financial markets, federal and local officials, and households faced with spending and career choices. The BLS, like every federal statistical agency, must modernize in order to produce the gold standard data on jobs, wages, skill needs, inflation, productivity and more that our businesses, researchers, and policymakers rely on so heavily. The requested funding level would restore less than half of BLS' loss in budget due to inflation since FY 2009, but would allow BLS to continue to support evidence-based policymaking, smart program evaluation, and confident business investment.

Institute of Education Sciences

COSSA requests \$670 million for the Institute of Education Sciences (IES) in FY 2020. As the research arm of the Department of Education, IES supports research and data to improve our understanding of education at all levels, from early childhood and elementary and secondary education, through higher education. Research further examines special education, rural education, teacher effectiveness, education technology, student achievement, reading and math interventions, and many other areas. IES-supported research has improved the quality of education research, led to the development of early interventions for improving child outcomes, generated and validated assessment measures for use with children, and led to the establishment of the What Works Clearinghouse for education research, highlighting interventions that work and identifying those that do not. With increasing demand for evidence-based practices in education, adequate funding for IES is essential to support studies that increase knowledge of the factors that influence teaching and learning and apply those findings to improve educational outcomes.

International Education and Foreign Language Programs

The Department of Education's International Education and Foreign Language programs play a major role in developing a steady supply of graduates with deep expertise and high-quality research on foreign languages and cultures, international markets, world regions, and global issues. COSSA urges a total appropriation of \$106.1 million (\$95.7 million for Title VI and \$10.5 million for Fulbright-Hays) for these programs, which would help make up for lost investment and purchasing power after five fiscal years of flat-funding. In addition to broadening opportunities for students in international and foreign language studies, such support would also strengthen the nation's human resource capabilities in strategic areas of the world that impact our national security and global economic competitiveness.

Thank you for the opportunity to present this testimony on behalf of the social and behavioral science research community.