



CONSORTIUM *of* SOCIAL SCIENCE ASSOCIATIONS

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Testimony in Support of Fiscal Year 2021 Funding for Federal Research Agencies
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,
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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) 2021, COSSA urges the Committee to appropriate:

- **\$44.7 billion** for the **National Institutes of Health**;
- **\$8.3 billion** for the **Centers for Disease Control and Prevention**, including **\$189 million** for the **National Center for Health Statistics**;
- **\$471 million** for the **Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality**;
- **\$658.3 million** for the **Bureau of Labor Statistics**;
- **\$670 million** for the **Institute of Education Sciences**; 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. The need for increased investment in science has become even more pronounced in light of the ongoing COVID-19 emergency. **It is important to note that the enclosed requests are for baseline budgets for FY 2021 and, without supplemental funding, will not be sufficient in making the agencies and programs whole once the pandemic subsidies and federal agencies return to regular activity.**

National Institutes of Health

COSSA joins the more than 330 organizations in support of **\$44.7 billion for the National Institutes of Health (NIH) in FY 2021**. COSSA appreciates the Subcommittee's leadership and its long-standing bipartisan support of NIH, especially during difficult budgetary times. However, recent public health events continue to underscore the need for additional investment. This funding level is important for NIH's baseline, but as previously stated, will not be enough to solve the present COVID-19 emergency and prepare for future public health crises.

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 contagion and social influences on health are needed now more than ever. In addition, understanding behavioral influences on health is needed to battle the leading causes of morbidity and mortality, namely, obesity, heart disease, cancer, AIDS, diabetes, age-related illnesses, accidents, substance abuse, and mental illness. **We urge Congress to emphasize support for OBSSR and encourage NIH to increase the Office's budget in FY 2021.**

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

COSSA urges the Subcommittee to appropriate \$8.3 billion for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), including \$189 million for CDC's National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS). 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 \$471 million for the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ), which would allow AHRQ to rebuild portfolios terminated as a result of years cuts and expand its research and training portfolio to address our nation's pressing and evolving health care challenges. 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, nursing homes, and other medical facilities). Its work is complementary—not duplicative—of other HHS agencies and requires robust support, especially in these trying times.

Bureau of Labor Statistics

COSSA urges the Subcommittee to appropriate \$658.3 million for the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) for its core programs. BLS 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 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 2021. Within 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 \$10.4 million for Fulbright-Hays),** which would help make up for lost investment and purchasing power over many 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.