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## **Statement on the Biden Administration’s Appointment of Dr. Alondra Nelson as Office of Science and Technology Policy Deputy Director for Science and Society**

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Washington, D.C. — The Consortium of Social Science Associations (COSSA) is greatly encouraged by the incoming Biden-Harris administration’s choice to elevate the Office of Science and Technology Policy Director’s position to the Cabinet level and especially heartened by the restoration and expansion of the Deputy Director for Science and Society position. “The choice of Dr. Alondra Nelson for the Deputy Director’s post is an outstanding one,” said Wendy Naus, COSSA’s Executive Director. “Dr. Nelson is a highly accomplished and widely recognized sociologist, whose leadership at the Social Science Research Council has been exemplary.”

The Deputy Director’s portfolio is still being developed, but featuring people prominently in the scientific equation is essential. According to Ed Liebow, COSSA’s board chair and executive director of the American Anthropological Association, “At its core, science is a never-ending and self-correcting quest for advancing our understanding of our evolving universe, a quest that is pursued by repeating a three-step cycle: predict – observe – revise our predictions. And here is where ‘society’ plays an essential role. We consider science to be ‘socially situated,’ by which we mean that at any given point in history, specific social and cultural circumstances shape the scientific problems we choose to pursue, the vantage points from which we make observations and interpret their significance, the investments we make in scientific infrastructure, and how we communicate the importance of scientific findings.”

Whether the applications of scientific research are dedicated to tackling such formidable problems as mitigating the effects of global climate change, eliminating health disparities, doing away with race-based and other forms of social injustice, preserving cultural heritage, or reducing the risk of armed conflict, COSSA stands by Dr. Nelson as she takes on this important service in the public interest.

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The Consortium of Social Science Associations (COSSA) is a nonprofit advocacy organization working to promote sustainable federal funding for social and behavioral science research and federal policies that positively impact the conduct of research. 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. The COSSA membership includes professional and disciplinary associations, scientific societies, research centers and institutes, and U.S. colleges and universities.

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