



CONSORTIUM of SOCIAL SCIENCE ASSOCIATIONS

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Testimony in Support of Fiscal Year 2026 Funding for Federal Research Agencies

Prepared for the Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, Education and Related Agencies, Committee on Appropriations, United States House of Representatives
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) 2026, COSSA urges the Committee to appropriate:

- **\$51.3 billion** for the **National Institutes of Health**;
- **\$220 million** for the **National Center for Health Statistics**;
- At least **\$500 million** for the **Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality**;
- At least **\$900 million** for the **Institute of Education Sciences**; and
- **\$91 million** for the Department of Education's **International Education and Foreign Language programs**;
- **\$770 million** for the **Bureau of Labor Statistics**.

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.

NATIONAL INSTITUTES OF HEALTH

COSSA urges the Subcommittee to appropriate at least \$51.3 billion for the National Institutes of Health (NIH) base budget in FY 2026. COSSA appreciates the Subcommittee's leadership and its long-standing bipartisan support of NIH, especially during difficult budgetary times. Robust support for NIH, as the foundation for nearly every preventative intervention, diagnostic treatment, and cure in practice today, improves the health of Americans from urban centers to rural communities. In addition to the health benefits that medical research promotes, the federal investment in this lifesaving work also has a multiplier effect in local and regional economies, catalyzes new industries, enhances U.S. global competitiveness, promotes our national security, establishes viable career paths for the next generation of scientists, and generates additional high-quality jobs in communities nationwide. A funding level of \$51.3 billion in FY 2026 is supported by [510 stakeholder organizations](#), including COSSA.

Unfortunately, NIH has been the target of recent executive actions and policy changes, including changing NIH's indirect cost rate to 15% for all grantees, which if implemented, would represent a major reduction in the country's investment in finding cures. In addition, the arbitrary canceling of hundreds of peer-reviewed, highly scored research grants further

comprises U.S. leadership in scientific research. We urge any efforts to restructure the NIH and other health agencies be done in partnership with the stakeholder community. **To that end, we hope the Subcommittee will not include in its FY 2026 appropriations bill directives for reorganizing the NIH and instead that a process be developed for gathering input from researchers, patients, and other stakeholders.**

In addition, COSSA urges the Subcommittee to prioritize investment in NIH's **Office of Behavioral and Social Sciences Research (OBSSR)**, housed within the Office of the NIH Director. This essential office coordinates basic, clinical, and translational research in the behavioral, social, and economic 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. Despite its expansive mission, the OBSSR budget, which is determined by the NIH Director, has not kept pace with the overall growth of NIH. Understanding behavioral influences on health is critical in battling the leading causes of morbidity and mortality in the U.S., including obesity, heart disease, cancer, HIV/AIDS, diabetes, age-related illnesses, accidents, substance abuse, and mental illness. **We urge the Committee to emphasize support for OBSSR and direct NIH to finally support the office at levels commensurate with the need for these necessary insights.**

NATIONAL CENTER FOR HEALTH STATISTICS

COSSA urges the Subcommittee to appropriate \$220 million for CDC's National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS). As the Department of Health and Human Services' principal statistical agency, the National Center for Health Statistics (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. Since FY 2010, NCHS has had a 21% loss of purchasing power despite being the gold-standard producer for health statistics around the world. 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 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. It would also allow NCHS to modernize and diversify its data collection efforts and deliver timely, meaningful information to public health officials, providers, patients, and scientists who rely on NCHS data while also strengthening the agency's ability to provide unbiased, current health data to policymakers.

AGENCY FOR HEALTHCARE RESEARCH AND QUALITY

COSSA urges the Subcommittee to appropriate no less than \$500 million for the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ), which would allow AHRQ to rebuild portfolios terminated as a result of years of 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.

We understand the Administration's desire to streamline the federal government and, in particular, reorganize HHS agencies. AHRQ is an important agency with a unique mission. Therefore, **we call on the Subcommittee to reject any proposals to shutter the agency or otherwise undermine its ability to continue this critical work and instead appropriate a budget of \$500 million for AHRQ in FY 2026.**

INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION SCIENCES

COSSA requests at least \$900 million for the Institute of Education Sciences (IES) in FY 2026. 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.

Unfortunately, due to recent executive actions, the Department of Education has seen its workforce cut in half and, more recently, has been directed to start the process of shutting down the department. This raises concerns about the ability of the U.S. to conduct the research and collect the data needed to improve education outcomes across the country. In particular, the **National Center for Education Statistics (NCES)**, which provides data on the state of education in the U.S. known as **The Nation's Report Card** (www.nationsreportcard.gov) is housed within IES and has lost nearly its entire workforce, making this data collection all but impossible. **We call on Congress to reject efforts aimed at decimating education research and data collection and restore funding to IES and NCES.**

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 \$91 million (\$79.9 million for Title VI and \$11 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.

BUREAU OF LABOR STATISTICS

COSSA urges the Subcommittee to appropriate \$770 million for the Bureau of Labor Statistics. Within the Department of Labor, BLS produces economic data essential for evidence-based decision-making by businesses and financial markets, federal, state, and local government officials, and households faced with spending and career choices. BLS must modernize to produce the gold-standard data on jobs, wages, skill needs, inflation, productivity and more that our businesses, researchers, and policymakers heavily rely on. The requested funding level would allow BLS to continue to support evidence-based policymaking, smart program evaluation, and confident business investment. Unfortunately, as with other federal statistical agencies, BLS has been subjected to recent executive actions resulting in the removal of data sources from public websites. We urge Congress to support robust funding and modernization of BLS to promote and protect the objectivity and reliability of America's data enterprise.

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