

**Testimony of Howard Silver, Executive Director, Consortium of Social Science Associations (COSSA), to the House Commerce, Justice, Science Subcommittee, House Appropriations Committee. Honorable Frank Wolf, Chairman. March 11, 2011.**

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Subcommittee:

My name is Howard Silver and I am the Executive Director of the Consortium of Social Science Associations (COSSA). The Consortium represents over 110 professional associations, scientific societies, universities and research institutes concerned with the promotion of and funding for research in the social, behavioral and economic sciences. COSSA functions as a bridge between the research world and the Washington community. A list of COSSA's membership is attached.

**COSSA appreciates the opportunity to comment on the proposed FY 2012 budgets for the National Science Foundation (NSF), for which we recommend at least \$7.767 billion, which is the Administration's request; \$70 million for the National Institute of Justice (NIJ) and \$62.5 million for the Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS), which are the Administration's FY 2011 requests. COSSA also strongly endorses the Administration's renewed request to set aside three percent of Office of Justice Programs' funds for research and statistics. NIJ and BJS have been underfunded for so long that as two National Academies' reports have noted they need enhanced resources to fulfill their missions. NSF, NIJ, and BJS all impact significantly federal support social and behavioral scientists receive to investigate issues important to the nation's future.**

COSSA is well aware that each year the Subcommittee confronts difficult choices among competing agencies under its jurisdiction. Especially in this era of budget reductions, we hope that you can provide sufficient funding for these agencies so that we do not curtail this nation's capacity for scientific research, education, and evidence-based policy making. COSSA appreciates your generosity to these agencies in the past and hopes that this can continue.

**NATIONAL SCIENCE FOUNDATION (NSF)**

With its distinguished new Director, Subra Suresh, and with Cora Marrett as Deputy Director (her Senate confirmation hopefully occurring in the near future), NSF has an exciting new top leadership team. The FY 2012 NSF budget submission reflects director's Suresh's vision that scientific research has entered a new era of observation, data, and information. Thus, we are disappointed that the House has proposed for NSF's FY 2011 funding, a \$359 million reduction from FY 2010 and an \$857 million reduction from the FY 2011 request. This is especially discouraging in light of the enactment with bipartisan support of the NSF reauthorization in last year's America COMPETES Act. Therefore, we strongly support the Administration's request to recoup some of these losses in FY 2012 by urging an NSF budget of \$7.767 billion, which would be a 13 percent boost over FY 2010 levels.

COSSA also strongly supports the FY 2012 request for \$6.254 billion for the Research and Related Activities Account, an increase of 12.4 percent over FY 2010 funding. We also want to express our appreciation to the Subcommittee for its support of ALL the disciplines that NSF funds.

In a new era of observation, data and information, the Social, Behavioral, and Economic Sciences (SBE) are superbly situated to contribute to the nation's scientific agenda and by extension its competitiveness and innovation. NSF remains extremely important for federal support for basic research in the SBE sciences, contributing 57 percent of that support. For some fields in these sciences, NSF is the only source of federal support for basic research and infrastructure development. NSF understands that important role and has requested a significant increase for the SBE directorate in FY 2012 that would push its funding above \$300 million for the first time. As noted last year, COSSA is delighted with Dr. Myron Gutmann as SBE's AD, who in addition to being a superb researcher, is our former president.

In most discussions of scientific discovery leading to innovation we hear a lot about activities in the physical and natural sciences and engineering. Two of the most important however, come from research in the SBE sciences. In the mid-1980s NSF made a commitment to fund the National Center for Geographic Information and Analysis (NCGIA) at three universities, the University of California, Santa Barbara, the University of Maine, and the State University of New York at Buffalo. The research supported there evolved into the multi-billion Geographic Information Systems (GIS) industry. These systems are now applied by states, counties, and localities for many purposes from planning to disaster response, evidenced in New York City during the September 11, 2001 attacks. GIS also became the backbone of crime mapping activities such as CompuStat that have played such an important role in the crime reduction America has experienced in the past two decades. These GIS are also used by the private sector to improve delivery systems and store location planning. The NCGIA continues to this day, now as an independent body, continuing to explore ways of making GIS better and helping to educate new users.

Basic economic research that won Nobel Prizes for Leonid Hurwicz and Vernon Smith as well as NSF-supported research conducted on maximizing auctions by economists Paul Milgrom, Robert Wilson, Charles Plott and others, has earned the federal government \$80 billion since spectrum auctions began in 1994. One of the proposals in the NSF's FY 2012 budget is to Enhance Access to the Radio Spectrum (EARS), once again using the knowledge from economics research to maximize returns. In addition, as with any expanded new technology, there are always social implications and unintended consequences that must be investigated.

Within NSF's initiatives for FY 2012 the SBE sciences plan to play significant roles. The nation's concern over Cybersecurity involves SBE research on the role of economic incentives. It will also enhance its role in the Science, Engineering, and Education for Sustainability (SEES) program, which involves research on understanding human behavior and decision making about energy use, as well as continued work on resilience in the face of natural disasters, particularly in coastal communities.

Social scientists have conducted significant research on social networks, whether investigating terrorist activities or the spread of sexually transmitted diseases. The FY 2012 proposed SBE budget will allow for research on cybernetworks, again useful for anti-terrorist activities, as well as examining the impact of Facebook and other social media for political activities such as the demands for democracy we are seeing in the Middle East.

Other highlights of the FY 2012 proposal include a new initiative that will support research on understanding population change in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. The small investment would examine

migration patterns and aging and their impact on job creation. Continued funding would occur for the Science of Science and Innovation Policy (SciSIP) and the enhancement of the Star Metrics system that will allow for future measurements of science's impact on economic outcomes, on scientific outcomes, and on social outcomes, such as public health.

The proposed budget will also enhance access to the three Gold Standard SBE Surveys – the Panel Study on Income Dynamics, the General Social Survey and the American National Election Studies. Each of these has painted a remarkable longitudinal portrait of Americans' economic, social, and political attitudes and behavior, so important for policy making at all levels of government.

Finally, SBE has begun an exercise in which it asked for input from the scientific community with regard to innovative research topics for the next ten years. SBE received over 250 responses. Former Nobel Prize Economists and Council of Economic Advisers members proposed broad research agendas in economics. A former American Political Science Association President proposed "a major funding effort across the social sciences to research and improve global indicators of governance and democracy," which has immediate resonance. The head of a private research lab recommended an agenda on real-world speech recognition. While a military sociologist called for an examination of "the long-term consequences of modern military service." Other proposals want to further examine links between biology and behavior, develop a new U.S. household survey, investigate the problems with non-responses to all surveys, and a renewed call for a "Science of the Mind" initiative. All the proposals are under discussion by SBE, its Advisory Board, and the broader social/behavioral science community.

COSSA is delighted that the former Science, Resources, Statistics division is now the National Center for Science and Engineering Statistics. A significant part of the FY 2012 request is the Center's proposed pilot project to test the feasibility of tagging and extracting agencies' administrative records to measure research and development activity in order to improve the quality and timeliness of the data.

COSSA strongly supports the FY 2012 budget request for the Education and Human Resources (EHR) of \$911.2 million. We particularly endorse the initiative to fund evaluation, synthesis, and comparison studies designed to increase knowledge of effective practices in STEM learning and education, and program evaluation studies. In line with COSSA's commitment to broadening participation in science through its leadership of the Collaborative for Enhancing Diversity in Science (CEDS), we strongly support the 15.2 percent increase over FY 2010 levels for the programs of EHR's Division of Human Resource Development (HRD).

## **NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF JUSTICE AND BUREAU OF JUSTICE STATISTICS**

On July 2, 2010 the National Academies' released its report, *Strengthening the National Institute of Justice* (NIJ). The report reviews the agency's structure and operations and suggests opportunities for new directions. The report also asks Congress to provide NIJ with the resources it has sorely lacked for many years to revitalize itself. Charles Wellford, Department of Criminology at the University of Maryland, chaired the committee that prepared the report. Committee members included former Attorney General Ed Meese and current Philadelphia and former DC Police Superintendent Charles Ramsey, as well as many researchers.

The report argues that "a federal research institute such as NIJ is vital to the nation's continuing efforts to control crime and administer justice," because no other governmental or private organization can provide similar activities and service. The report recognizes that NIJ "has accomplished a great deal" in its forty-year history including developing a body of knowledge on such important topics as hot spot policing, violence against women, the role of firearms and drugs in crime, drug courts, and forensic DNA analysis". NIJ, the report continues, has also built a crime and justice research infrastructure and widely disseminated the results of the research it supported to help guide practice and policy.

The Committee recommended the establishment of an Advisory Board to help NIJ develop a long-term research agenda. On January 28, 2011 an Office of Justice Programs Scientific Advisory Board (SAB), chaired by Carnegie Mellon Criminologist and former COSSA President Al Blumstein, held its first meeting. At the meeting, new NIJ Director John Laub, distinguished criminologist and co-winner of the 2011 Stockholm Prize in Criminology, outlined his vision for the agency.

Within NIJ, Laub explained to the Board that he sees three distinct scientific endeavors: social science research, technology research, and forensics research. For the new director, integrating these activities through interdisciplinary research is a major goal.

In discussing an agenda, Laub indicated that he wanted NIJ to: 1) Continue its traditional examination of crime trends; 2) Take a special look at mentally ill offenders; 3) Investigate the issues around procedural justice; 4) Examine the victim-offender overlap; 5) Try to understand offender thinking; 6) Evaluate the technology NIJ research has developed; and 7) Disseminate the results of NIJ research through Translational Criminology; and 8) Ascertain how practitioners use evidence from research in their decision making. Laub also committed himself to improving NIJ's peer review process calling it "central to good science." He suggested that standing peer review panels, similar to other science agencies, would help NIJ.

The practitioner community has been working with the NIJ research community more and more. Sophisticated police chiefs all around the country use criminal justice research to reform how they combat crime. At a recent briefing, co-sponsored by COSSA and the American Society of Criminology, former Attorney General Richard Thornburgh and former LA, NYC, and Boston Police Commissioner Bill Bratton responded positively to a paper by researchers Daniel Nagin of Carnegie Mellon and Steven Durflauf of the University of Wisconsin-Madison describing strategies to reduce crime and imprisonment by concentrating on better policing strategies that would focus on prevention. The NIJ-supported Harvard Executive Sessions on Policing and Public Safety have brought together police chiefs like DC's Cathy Lanier with researchers to discuss evidence-based policing practices that have led to crime reduction. The work of George Mason's Center for Evidence-Based Crime Policy, led by 2010 Stockholm Prize winner and COSSA Board member David Weisburd, has also led the way in practitioner-researcher cooperation.

The BJS has its own National Academies' report, *Ensuring the Quality, Credibility, and Relevance of U.S. Justice Statistics*, issued in 2009. That report repeatedly emphasized the fact that BJS, as the agency responsible for the nation's criminal justice statistics, is grossly underfunded, and recommended increasing its scope and support. COSSA is grateful for the

Subcommittee's generosity in helping BJS implement the part of the report calling for the revitalization of the National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS).

BJS's new director James Lynch, another distinguished criminologist, also discussed his initiatives at the SAB. They include:

- 1) Redesign and Rebuild the National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS) by enhancing the sample, improving quality control, and developing sub-national data. Within the NCVS, there is also a need to improve rape and sexual assault data and to determine how to measure juvenile crime victimization;
- 2) Explore operational data for statistical purposes so that BJS can develop better and more accurate statistical systems for crime;
- 3) Institute information exchanges with police departments, especially since many departments are collecting their own crime data;
- 4) Improve sentencing and pre-trial data;
- 5) Enhance data on corrections: How do we better measure the flow into and out of our prison systems? and
- 6) Expand data on law enforcement management.

The Bureau's data are used daily by policymakers at all levels of government to make informed decisions. BJS' data collection series includes correctional populations and facilities; courts and sentencing; prosecution; law enforcement; sex offender registries; and criminal history records. The agency is collecting and analyzing recidivism data and making the results available to the states for their own analyses, which will provide valuable information for decision makers at a time when reducing incarceration and making evidence-based decisions are priorities for every state. BJS is also working to improve the precision of data across all series, collect better statistics for Indian country, and respond to recommendations to study the operations of police agencies.

The state Statistical Analysis Centers (SACs), receive modest support from BJS through the State Justice Statistics program, and have provided vital service to BJS over the years. SACs constitute the majority of data collection providers for the BJS Arrest-Related Deaths data series. The SACS also conduct research—including multistate efforts--on topics such as drug use, sex offenders, and parole revocations. In FY 2010, the SJS program provided funds to 46 SACs for approximately \$3 million. It is critical that this minimal level of funding be sustained.

Providing enhanced funding for NSF, NIJ, and BJS are good investments for the nation's future. Scientific discoveries leading to innovation, educated citizens in an increasingly science and technology focused world, and providing safe communities, should be part of any national priority list. Be as generous as you can to these vital programs!

Thank you for the opportunity to present our views.

# CONSORTIUM OF SOCIAL SCIENCE ASSOCIATIONS

## GOVERNING MEMBERS

American Association for Public Opinion Research  
American Economic Association  
American Educational Research Association  
American Historical Association  
American Political Science Association  
American Psychological Association  
American Society of Criminology  
American Sociological Association  
American Statistical Association

Association of American Geographers  
Association of American Law Schools  
Law and Society Association  
Linguistic Society of America  
Midwest Political Science Association  
National Communication Association  
Population Association of America  
Rural Sociological Society  
Society for Research in Child Development

## MEMBERSHIP ORGANIZATIONS

Academy of Criminal Justice Sciences  
American Finance Association  
American Psychosomatic Society  
Association for Asian Studies  
Association for Public Policy Analysis and Management  
Association of Academic Survey Research Organizations  
Association of Research Libraries  
Council on Social Work Education  
Eastern Sociological Society  
Economic History Association  
Justice Research and Statistics Association  
Midwest Sociological Society

National Association of Social Workers  
North American Regional Science Council  
North Central Sociological Association  
Social Science History Association  
Society for Behavioral Medicine  
Society for Research on Adolescence  
Society for Social Work and Research  
Society for the Psychological Study of Social Issues  
Southern Political Science Association  
Southern Sociological Society  
Southwestern Social Science Association

## COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES

Arizona State University  
Boston University  
Brown University  
University of California, Berkeley  
University of California, Irvine  
University of California, Los Angeles  
University of California, San Diego  
University of California, Santa Barbara  
Carnegie-Mellon University  
University of Chicago  
Clark University  
Columbia University  
University of Connecticut  
Cornell University  
University of Delaware  
Duke University  
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Tulane University  
Vanderbilt University  
University of Virginia  
University of Washington  
Washington University in St. Louis  
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## CENTERS AND INSTITUTES

American Academy of Political and Social Sciences  
American Council of Learned Societies  
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Brookings Institution  
Center for Advanced Study in the Behavioral Sciences  
Cornell Institute for Social and Economic Research  
Institute for Social Research, University of Michigan

Institute for Women's Policy Research  
National Bureau of Economic Research  
National Opinion Research Center  
Population Reference Bureau  
RTI International  
Social Science Research Council  
Vera Institute of Justice