

## **Public Affairs Update Fall 2007**

On Sunday, August 5, the U.S. House of Representatives passed its 12<sup>th</sup> and final appropriations bill. However, thus far, the U.S. Senate has only passed one (Homeland Security Appropriations bill) of the 12 appropriations bills. The lack of progress on appropriations increases the likelihood Congress will have to pass a continuing resolution to keep most federal agencies operating beyond September 30, the last day in Fiscal Year 2007. It also raises the prospect of a year-end omnibus bill. The fate of the Fiscal Year 2008 appropriations bills are further complicated by the Bush Administration's veto threat against most of the Democratic spending bills, because they exceed the President's overall budget request by \$23 billion.

### **Fiscal Year 2008 Appropriations Highlights**

***NIH Demographic and Economic Research Programs***—With support of Congresswoman Rosa DeLauro (D-CT) and Senator Tom Harkin (D-IA) and Senator Arlen Specter (R-PA), the House and Senate Labor, Health and Human Services and Education Appropriations Subcommittees included provisions in the reports (#110-231 and #110-107 respectively) accompanying these funding bills, praising the population research programs at the National Institute on Aging (NIA) and National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD). Specifically, the language urges the NIA to maintain its support of the Demography of Aging programs. The NICHD is urged to continue investing in demographic research training and infrastructure support funding mechanisms.

***National Children's Study***—Both the House and Senate Labor, Health and Human Services and Education appropriations bills provided \$110.9 million to support the National Children's Study (NCS) within the NIH Office of the Director. This funding will help expand the number of study centers and study locations across the country. Congress had to provide this funding in a separate line since the Bush Administration had, once again, recommended eliminating funding for the NCS.

### ***Census Bureau***

***House Action--*** The House Commerce, Justice, and Science Appropriations Subcommittee had recommended providing the Census Bureau with an additional \$2 million in FY 2008 above the Bush Administration's request of \$1.2 billion. The additional funding was to be used to fund the Bureau's partnership programs in 2008. The Committee also specified that an additional \$19 million in the bill be used to maintain the Survey of Income and Program Participation (SIPP) with a full sample. However, when the House Appropriations Committee considered the Subcommittee bill, an amendment was accepted cutting the Bureau by \$30 million to fund an incarceration program administered by the Department of Justice (DOJ). Further, when the bill was considered on the floor of the U.S. House of Representatives, another amendment was accepted cutting the Bureau by an additional \$10 million to fund two other DOJ programs. If these cuts prevail in the final version of the funding bill negotiated by the House and Senate, the Bureau will have to cut various aspects of the Economic Census.

During floor consideration of the bill, the PAA sent a letter to every member of the House, as a member of the Census Project, urging them to vote against any amendments that would cut the Bureau's budget. The letter is posted at:

<http://www.thecensusproject.org/July2007letter.pdf>

**Senate Action**—The full U.S. Senate has not yet considered its version of the Commerce, Justice, and Science appropriations bill, and at press time, it was not clear if and when the Senate would schedule debate on this bill. However, the Senate Appropriations Committee has voted on the bill, making it eligible for floor consideration. The Senate version of the bill does not include additional funds for the Bureau's partnerships programs or for the American Community Survey (ACS) Methods Panel, which is responsible for testing new ACS questionnaire content and methodologies. However, the Senate has included language requiring an additional \$18 million be spent to fully fund SIPP.

Differences between the House and Senate funding levels for the Census Bureau will have to be negotiated after the full Senate considers the bill since additional changes could emerge from that stage of the legislative process.

#### **PAA in Washington DC**

**2007 Coalition for National Science Funding Exhibition and Reception**—On June 26, Dr. Lingxin Hao, Johns Hopkins University, represented PAA and the Association of Population Centers (APC) at the 13<sup>th</sup> Annual Coalition for National Science Funding Exhibition and Reception. The event brings researchers from across the country to Capitol Hill to showcase important science, mathematics and engineering research and education projects being supported by the National Science Foundation (NSF). Members of Congress, congressional staff and federal officials attended the event. Dr. Hao was chosen to present her work on whether variations in immigrant composition across metropolitan areas shape economic inequality and mobility. Pictures of her exhibit are posted at: <http://www.popassoc.org/HaoPresentation.jpg>

**CSR Open House**—On April 25, Dr. Barbara Entwisle, PAA President, and Dr. Michael White, APC President, attended an Open House on Behavioral and Social Science Integrated Review Groups (IRG) hosted by the NIH Center for Scientific Review. The purpose of this meeting was to solicit input from leaders of the scientific community and other stakeholders on the alignment of the CSR IRGs and component study sections. Participants were asked to discuss what will be the most important questions and/or enabling technologies within the science of their disciplines in the next 10 years and if the science of their disciplines, in its present state, is being appropriately evaluated within the current study section alignment.

NIH is considering possible changes to its peer review system. A working group of the Advisory Committee to the NIH Director is holding meetings around the nation this fall to receive feedback from the community on the strengths and deficiencies of the current peer review process. On July 6, NIH issued a request for information (RFI) seeking input on six specific questions related to its peer review process. PAA and APC will be

sending comments. Individuals may also submit comments through September 7, 2007. For more information and to review the RFI, go to: <http://enhancing-peer-review.nih.gov/>. PAA and APC will post their comments on the public affairs link.

***NIH Director's Lecture***—Also on April 25, Dr. Martina Morris, Director, Center for Studies in Demography and Ecology, University of Washington, presented at the NIH Director's Wednesday Afternoon Lecture Series on the NIH Campus. Her presentation was entitled “Local Acts, Global Consequences: Networks and the Spread of HIV.”

### ***Congressional Briefings and Meetings***

**Census Meetings**--On May 9, Dr. Barbara Entwisle, PAA President, Ms. Paula Schneider, PAA member, and Ms. Mary Jo Hoeksema, met with Congressman David Price (D-NC) and other congressional staff to discuss funding for the Census Bureau in Fiscal Year 2008. The group also met with Mr. John Kilvington, Staff Director, Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Subcommittee on Federal Financial Management, Government Information, Federal Services, and International Security, which has oversight of the Census Bureau. The purpose of this meeting was to discuss the subcommittee's interests during the 110<sup>th</sup> Congress.

**Global Aging Briefing**--On May 21, PAA and APC and the Consortium of Social Science Associations, in conjunction with the Senate Special Committee on Aging, sponsored a briefing on Capitol Hill for senior congressional staff, entitled “Why Population Aging Matters: A Global Perspective.” The following speakers participated in the briefing, Dr. Joseph Chamie, Dr. Lisa Berkman, Dr. Adele Hayutin, and Dr. James Smith. Their presentations are posted at: [http://www.cossa.org/seminars/2007/Population\\_Aging.pdf](http://www.cossa.org/seminars/2007/Population_Aging.pdf)

**NHIS reception**—On June 21, PAA and APC cosponsored a reception at the U.S. Botanical Gardens in Washington, D. C., commemorating the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the National Health Interview Survey (NHIS). Senior CDC, NCHS, and Census Bureau officials, as well as members of Congress and congressional staff, attended this event, which featured a series of posters highlighting major advances from the survey.

### **Other News Highlights**

***NSF Reauthorization***—On August 2, Congress passed H.R. 2272, America Competes Act, a bill that, among other things, establishes new grants to train and hire 25,000 teachers in mathematics, engineering and science. The bill also reauthorizes the NSF for three years at levels that will allow the agency to maintain its timetable of doubling the budget in seven years. During final deliberations, Congressman Brian Baird (D-WA) convinced his colleagues to insert the phrase “social sciences” into the Priority Treatment paragraph of the legislation on “Meeting Critical National Science Needs.” This paragraph now lists all the sciences NSF supports as a priority. At press time, it was not clear if the President would sign the bill. However, the Administration had not issued a veto threat.

***Census Bureau Director nominated***— On June 20, President Bush nominated Dr. Steve Murdock to be the next director of the U.S. Census Bureau. The U.S. Senate will need to confirm Dr. Murdock, a PAA member and the State Demographer of Texas, before he can become the next director. At press time, the Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee had not scheduled a nomination hearing. PAA and APC plan to send a letter to select members of the U.S. Senate supporting Dr. Murdock's nomination and urging an expeditious consideration of his nomination. The letter will be posted on the PAA and APC public affairs link.

For more information about PAA public affairs activities, you can visit the new public affairs link on the PAA home page at:

<http://www.popassoc.org/PublicAffairsCommittee.html>