

U.S. House Appropriations Report Shows Behavioral Science is a Congressional Priority

July 16, 2021



From the Association for Psychological Science's (APS) government relations team, here's a hot-off-the-presses update on great news coming out of the U.S. federal government appropriations process of direct relevance to psychological scientists. This news results from APS's direct advocacy efforts on behalf of APS members.

On July 15, 2021, the U.S. House of Representatives Appropriations Committee approved both the fiscal year (FY) 2022 Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education Appropriations (Labor-HHS) bill that funds the National Institutes of Health (NIH), and the FY 2022 Commerce-Justice-Science (CJS) bill that funds the National Science Foundation (NSF). The bills reflect the Committee's policy priorities and guidance to the federal agencies. We are pleased to report that several APS policy priorities have been included in both the Labor-HHS and the CJS reports.

The House Appropriations Committee included a total of \$49 billion for NIH in its budget recommendation, an increase of \$6.5 billion above the FY 2021 enacted level. This amount includes \$3 billion to establish the Advanced Research Projects Agency for Health (ARPA-H) to accelerate the pace

of scientific breakthroughs for diseases such as Alzheimer's disease, diabetes, and cancer. The bill also includes an increase of \$3.5 billion for existing NIH institutes and centers, supporting a budget increase of no less than 5 percent for each for the purpose of supporting a wide range of biomedical and behavioral research.

Beyond the increased funding totals, the bill's accompanying report included language advocated for by APS. The Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) Office of the Secretary is urged to include psychological scientists at every level of its response to COVID-19 and future public health emergencies. The Office of the Surgeon General is directed to update its regulations to permit the graduates of Psychological Clinical Science Accreditation System (PCSAS) programs to be eligible for employment by the Public Health Service Corps. Additionally, there is language providing NIH's Office of Behavioral and Social Sciences Research—which coordinates psychological science and other behavioral science fields at NIH—with a \$20 million increase in funding; this language also urges NIH to increase OBSSR authority and to review its organizational structure.

In the FY 2022 Commerce-Justice-Science bill, the House Appropriations Committee provided \$9.6 billion for the National Science Foundation (NSF), an increase of \$1.15 billion above fiscal year 2021. Included in the bill's accompanying report is language supportive of the Social, Behavioral and Economic Sciences Directorate, which funds a significant proportion of the psychological science granted by the U.S. federal government. These crucial pieces of Labor-HHS and CJS language follow from APS's visits to Capitol Hill in the first quarter of 2021.

The Senate is expected to approve their version of the FY 2022 spending bills later this summer or in early fall. The bills will not be finalized until agreement is reached by both bodies and President Biden signs it into law. APS will continue to advocate on behalf of our members to ensure the priorities reflected in the House legislation ultimately become law.

Below is the complete language that was included in the House Labor-HHS and CJS reports.

FY 2022 House Labor-HHS Report

Adopted by the full committee on July 15, 2021

NIH Office of the Director:

Office of Behavioral and Social Sciences Research (OBSSR).—The Committee includes \$49,827,000 for OBSSR, an increase of \$20,000,000 above the fiscal year 2021 enacted level and \$19,523,000 above the fiscal year 2022 budget request. The Committee notes that OBSSR has the mission to enhance NIH's behavioral science research enterprise across all Institutes and Centers. As multiple Surgeons General and NASEM have declared that most health problems facing the nation have significant behavioral components, the Committee strongly supports the continued strengthening of the behavioral science enterprise at NIH and urges OBSSR funding be increased to accomplish this mission. In this regard, the Committee is pleased that an NIH working group has been established to review how better to integrate and realize the benefits of overall health from behavioral research at NIH, and directs that appropriate OBSSR funding levels, authority, and organizational structure be included in this review.

Office of the Secretary:

Behavioral Science and the COVID–19 National Strategy.—The Committee applauds the Administration’s robust National Strategy for the COVID–19 Response and Pandemic Preparedness and appreciates that the strategy reflects the best advice of scientists and public health experts. As our success in these areas depends on our scientific understanding of human behavior, the Committee urges the Department to include psychological scientists at every level of the Department’s response to COVID–19 and future public health emergencies to most effectively meet these common goals.

Public Health Service Corps Eligibility Requirements. —The Committee is concerned that the Office of the Surgeon General has not complied with language in the Joint Explanatory Statement for P.L. 116–260 which encouraged the Secretary to update accreditation and eligibility requirements for the Public Health Service Corps to allow access to the best qualified applicants, including those who graduate from [Psychological Clinical Science Accreditation System programs](#). The Committee urges the Department to make the necessary changes to its eligibility requirements

FY 2022 House Commerce-Justice-Science Report

Adopted by the full committee on July 15, 2021

Social, Behavioral, and Economic (SBE) Sciences.—The Committee supports SBE and recognizes the fundamental importance of its research for advancing our understanding of human behavior and its application to a wide range of human systems, including public health, national defense and security, education and learning, and the integration of human and machine. SBE funds over half of our nation’s university-based social and behavioral science research but remains the smallest of NSF directorates. The Committee believes this research provides an evidence-based understanding of the human condition, resulting in more-informed policymaking and better-informed spending on a full range of national issues. The Committee encourages NSF to continue its support of these programs.