AEA Committee on Government Relations' ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Committee on Government Relations is a subcommittee of the American Economic Association charged with representing the interests of the economics profession in Washington DC and other locations around the country without taking a position on questions of economic policy or on any partisan matter.

Threats to NIH Funding of Economic Research

Those AEA members interested in current developments in Washington concerning the funding of economic research by the National Institute of Health (NIH) may wish to know that over the last year, several influential members of the House of Representatives have criticized the NIH for supporting certain areas of research, particularly economics-related research. These actions include:

- Drafting an appropriations bill for fiscal year 2013 that would prohibit the NIH from supporting "any economic research programs, projects or activities;"

- Introducing an amendment to the Continuing Resolution for fiscal year 2013 that would prohibit funding economic-related research via the NIH's Common Fund – a program designed to promote cross-disciplinary research across the NIH;

- A letter from the chair of the House Appropriations Committee to the Director of the NIH questioning the NIH for spending "precious biomedical research funds on healthcare economics research."

Although none of the above initiatives have yet been adopted by Congress, Representative Lucille Roybal-Allard (D-CA), at the request of the Consortium of Social Science Associations, has written a letter to the Director of NIH affirming the value of NIH-funded social and behavioral research including economics and the relevance of this research to NIH's mission.

Representative Roybal-Allard is currently seeking support from other members of the House of Representatives for her letter. Any AEA member who is interested in learning more about this effort, and is interested in taking action to support it, can find out how to do so here.