



AEA Committee on Government Relations' ANNOUNCEMENTS

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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.

Federal Science and Statistical Agency Budgets Increase

In January Congress passed and the President signed into law the [Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2014](#). This Act is an omnibus spending package that provides \$1.1 trillion for federal government missions, agencies, and programs through September 30, 2014. And, unlike last year, the budget will not be subject to sequestration, i.e., across-the-board budget cuts of defense and non-defense spending. The omnibus bill increases the budgets of the National Science Foundation (NSF), National Institutes of Health (NIH), U.S. Census Bureau (CENSUS), Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA) and the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) relative to their post-sequester FY2013 budgets but not the Administration's request.

| CONGRESSIONAL ACTION BY AGENCY | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---------------|---------------|---------|-------|--------|---------------|----------------------|-------|---------|
| (budget authority in millions of dollars) | | | | | | | | | |
| Agency | FY12 | FY13 | FY14 | | | | % Change Relative to | | |
| | | | Request | House | Senate | Omnibus | FY13 | FY12 | Request |
| NSF* | 5,705 | 5,510 | 6,240 | 5,697 | 6,059 | 5,844 | 6.1% | 2.4% | -6.3% |
| * Research and Related Activities | | | | | | | | | |
| http://www.aaas.org/news/rd-fy-2014-omnibus-national-science-foundation | | | | | | | | | |
| NIH | 30,100 | 28,360 | 30,490 | | 30,339 | 29,344 | 3.5% | -2.5% | -3.8% |
| http://www.aaas.org/news/rd-fy-2014-omnibus-national-institutes-health | | | | | | | | | |
| CENSUS | 942 | 859 | 983 | 845 | 973 | 945 | 10.0% | 0.3% | -3.9% |
| BEA | 92.2 | 89.8 | 100 | 89.6 | 100 | 95 | 5.8% | 3.0% | -5.0% |
| BLS | 609 | 577.2 | 610 | | 610 | 592.2 | 2.6% | -2.8% | -2.9% |
| http://community.amstat.org/blogsmain/blogviewer/?BlogKey=04a5f67b-5f7b-4bf0-aa81-dc23cd1a6304 | | | | | | | | | |

The omnibus bill was free of the restrictive provisions on social science research and surveys that had surfaced in recent years. These include the so-called "Coburn amendment" which required NSF's Political Science Program to fund only projects in the U.S. economic or national defense interest, a provision that would have forced CENSUS to close down the American Community Survey, and a provision that would have prohibited NIH from supporting any economic research program, project or activity. But according to the omnibus, BLS has "sufficient funding necessary to ensure that the frequency of NLS (National Longitudinal Survey) data collection occurs not less than biennially."

For a comprehensive overview of federal defense and nondefense R&D in the FY2014 omnibus go [here](#) and for the budgets of statistical agencies go [here](#). For an analysis of the implications for the social and behavioral sciences of the FY2014 omnibus go [here](#) and for analysis of the statistical agency budgets go [here](#).

Access to Timely Mortality Data

According to the U.S. Dept of Commerce's [Important Notice Regarding the Death Master File](#) the provision "Restriction on Access to the Death Master File" (Section 203) of the Bipartisan Budget Act of 2013 would limit timely access to DMF data to those with "a legitimate fraud prevention or a legitimate business purpose pursuant to a law, governmental rule, regulation, or fiduciary duty." Others would be required to wait for at least three years beyond the date of an individual's death. The Department of Commerce is drawing up regulations for implementing these regulations. The AEA Committee on Government Relations has made sent [statements](#) to Congress and the Administration about the importance of continued access to DMF by federal scientists, grantees, and as long as they meet the standards for safeguarding the DMF data.

New Rules Proposed for IRB Review

On January 9, the National Research Council (NRC) issued a report, [Proposed Revisions to the Common Rule for the Protection of Human Subjects in the Behavioral and Social Sciences](#). The report proposes updates to federal regulations that protect human research subjects, also known as the Common Rule. If the recommendations of the NRC report are adopted, it would help economic research by exempting or expediting review of economic research with minimal risk by Independent Review Boards. The report also rejects the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) as the sole standard for specifying data protection plans with respect to social and behavioral research. HIPAA is the standard used for sensitive medical data and would be much too restrictive for empirical economic research.

AEA Summer Economics Fellows Applications Solicited

The target date for applications for American Economic Association Summer Economics fellowships for senior graduate students and junior faculty is February 15, 2014!

The goal of this program is to advance the participation of underrepresented minorities and women in the economics profession. Fellows are mentored by experienced economists while pursuing their own research during their residency at one of the sponsoring institutions, e.g., US statistical agencies, Federal Reserve banks, other US and international institutions. In 2013 11 AEA Summer Fellows were placed at 7 different institutions. The program announcement can be found [here](#).