



# 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.*

## FY 2015 Budget Request

In March President Obama asked for \$3.901 trillion in Federal spending in fiscal year (FY) 2015. This budget request keeps to the caps in the Bipartisan Budget Act of 2013. But there is also a request for an additional \$56 billion in discretionary spending for an "Opportunity, Growth and Security Initiative" supposedly paid for by spending cuts and additional revenue created by closing tax breaks. This initiative would provide an additional \$5.3 billion in additional R&D funding. It would add an extra \$552 million to NSF and \$970 million to NIH budgets.

BUDGET REQUESTS FOR RESEARCH & STATISTICAL AGENCIES							
(budget authority in millions of dollars)							
Agency	FY12	FY13	FY14	FY15	% Change Relative to		
				Request	FY14	FY13	FY12
NSF	7,033	6,884	7,172	7,255	1.2%	5.4%	3.2%
NIH	30,100	29,300	29,926	30,200	0.9%	3.1%	0.3%
CENSUS	942	859	945	1211	28.1%	41.0%	28.6%
BEA	92.2	89.8	95	107	12.6%	19.2%	16.1%
BLS	609	577.2	592.2	610.1	3.0%	5.7%	0.2%

For the Consortium of Social Science Association's comprehensive and detailed discussion of the President's FY 2015 budget request for federal agencies and programs important to social and behavioral science go [here](#).

## House Science Committee Targets SBE

The House Science, Space and Technology Committee is expected to vote on and will probably pass the Frontiers in Research, Science and Technology Act ([H.R. 4186](#)), or FIRST Act at the end of April. The bill would authorize overall funding levels for the National Science Foundation in FY 2014 and FY2015. The bill as passed by the House SS & T Subcommittee on Research on March 13th would set FY 2014 and 2015 funding levels for NSF's Directorate for the Social, Behavioral and Economic Sciences (SBE) at \$150 million, which is nearly 42 percent below SBE's FY 2014 level. The bill would interfere with NSF's peer review process, require



duplicative public disclosure of research grants, and limit the number of awards that can be made to the same principal investigator. [Statements](#) from a number of associations and an [alert](#) from the Consortium of Social Science Associations (COSSA) ask members of Congress to vote against the FIRST Act.

The FIRST Act is not an immediate threat to the SBE Directorate since it is the appropriation that actually determines budgets; NSF already has its FY 2014 appropriation; the FIRST Act will probably not pass the Senate; and, in the case of NSF, appropriators have in the recent past not been guided by authorizations. But in the longer term a vote in the House SS & T Committee to target NSF's SBE Directorate for steep cuts in its authorization does increase the risk to future NSF appropriations for economic research and economic data.

## **BLS Export Prices Program Gets Reprieve**

On March 26th BLS announced that it will completely terminate its export prices program. This would have deprived BEA of data needed to deflate national income statistics and economists would have lost microdata needed for research on exchange rate pass-through, price dispersion, quality differences across country of origin, transfer pricing and many other important issues.

On April 9th BLS announced it "will continue to produce and publish these indexes through the first quarter of FY 2015. Once the discussions to explore alternative funding sources are concluded, an announcement will be made concerning how the necessary data will be produced to avoid any disruption to the calculation of the real Gross Domestic Product (GDP)." Go [here](#) for the original announcement and the update.

## **Access to Timely Mortality Data - UPDATE**

Section 203 of the Bipartisan Budget Act of 2013 directs the Secretary of Commerce to establish a certification program under which persons may obtain immediate access to the publicly available Death Master File (DMF) but only for fraud prevention or legitimate business purpose. Surveys and economic research could lose timely access to death records under the certification program.

On March 26, 2014 the National Technical Information Service issued an [interim final rule](#) to establish a certification program under which persons may obtain immediate access to the publicly available Death Master File (DMF), pursuant to Section 203 of the Bipartisan Budget Act of 2013 (Act). Comments are due on this interim final rule on or before 5:00 p.m. Eastern time April 25, 2014.

The AEA Committee on Government Relations (CGR) has been assured that surveys and research supported by grants from NSF and NIH should have continued access under the interim plan. Economics applicants for certification should alert the CGR by sending an [e-mail](#) to Dan Newlon. If appropriate they should also cite NSF and/or NIH support for their research and/or data collection.