

Committee on Government Relations (CGR)

The members of the American Economic Association Committee on Government Relations (CGR) in 2021 were: Kenneth Troske (Kentucky), Chair; Joe Aldy (Harvard); Karen Dynan (Harvard); Sherry Glied (New York); Thomas Holmes (Minnesota); Bruce Meyer (Chicago); Fiona Scott Morton (Yale); Jay Shambaugh (George Washington); Betsey Stevenson (Michigan); and Steve Trejo (Texas at Austin). Katherine (Kitty) Smith Evans staffs the committee.

The CGR was established in 2009 to represent the interests of the economics profession in Washington, DC and other locations around the country. A description of the committee's primary activities may be found on its website (<https://www.aeaweb.org/about-aea/committees/government-relations>). As is true of the AEA, the committee does not take positions on questions of economic policy or on any partisan matter.

Meetings.—The committee met by phone nine times in 2021. Kitty Smith Evans also met frequently with representatives of the Consortium of Social Science Associations (COSSA) and other organizations whose interests overlap with those of the AEA, and with relevant staff at the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS), National Science Foundation (NSF), the Federation of Brain and Behavioral Sciences (FABBS), the Data Foundation, the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) and the Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA), attending membership, informational, and advisory committee meetings.

Issues.—In 2021, the AEA CGR monitored actions by Congressional Appropriations committees to fund government science and statistical agencies of importance to AEA members. The committee took on as a priority and followed closely the federal government's progress toward implementing the 2018 Foundations for Evidence Based Policymaking Act, including the recommendations of the

Advisory Committee on Data for Evidence Building (ACDEB). It has also followed congressional actions that would, if passed, limit the opportunity for economists to conduct specific types of research.

- The CGR issued (jointly with the AEASat Committee) a series of pointed answers to various questions posed by the Advisory Committee on Data for Evidence Building (ACDEB) <https://www.aeaweb.org/content/file?id=13947>.
- In response to a December 2, 2021, Federal Register Request for Comment on the first annual report of the ACDEB, the CGR submitted a series of comments.
- The CGR discussed and is monitoring concern expressed in a letter from Senators Crapo and Grassley to the Senate Finance Committee that proposes a series of actions on IRS data protection, including elimination of the Joint Statistical Research Program of the Statistics of Income Division of the IRS. This program, which allows limited access by collaborating economists to IRS tax microdata, has been a boon for economists' research on factors that affect earning power. If this concern blooms into proposed legislation, the CGR stands ready to comment.
- The CGR jointly released, with the AEASat, a statement on "How Data Synchrony Can Save US Official Statistics" (<https://www.aeaweb.org/content/file?id=15315>), for use by AEA Committee members and groups with which AEA collaborates, in explaining the need for synchronization of business data across the three principal economic statistical agencies. This will be an important document in a planned campaign to promote the need for synchronization of business data across the three principal economic statistics agencies.

- The CGR and AEASat Committees jointly developed an AEA-oriented statement on “Needed Improvement in the US Statistical Infrastructure,” as a vehicle for briefing new members of the Biden/Harris administration. The statement was widely distributed and formed the basis for discussion with a selection of new White House and Cabinet Department policy leaders.
- CGR member Joe Aldy is using the administration’s push for evidence-informed policy as a means for more directly inserting economics in the climate change policy space.

AEA 2022 Policy Session

- CGR Chair Ken Troske organized a panel of high-level and highly informed people for a policy session at the 2022 AEA meetings on “Increased Access to Administrative Data for Policy Research: Its Value and How We Get There” (https://www.aeaweb.org/conference/2022/preliminary/1437?q=eNqrVipOLS7OzM8LqSxIVbKqhnGvRjQMIWp11BKLi_OTgRwlHaWS1KJcXCarpCi_ODsV

yE9JrIRKZOamQIhlmanlIEOKCgqAAqYG SrW1XDBcMPUd0A; <https://www.aeaweb.org/conference/2022/preliminary/1437?>).

Coordination and Collaboration with other Organizations

- The formal comments, statements, and letters made and sent by the committee were all featured on Twitter and EconTwitter. The Report to Inform the Biden-Harris Transition Team was also posted on EconSpark and LinkedIn. Considerable attention to the social media postings indicates interest by AEA members and others in the activities of the CGR.
- The website for the AEA CGR is undergoing an extensive makeover to eliminate or archive less necessary or out-of-date pages and to reorganize and consolidate pages of greatest interest to AEA members. Upon completion of the overhaul, an announcement will be made to AEA members inviting them to take a look at the website, and periodic EconTwitter posts will make members aware of new information on the site.

KENNETH TROSKE, *Chair*