

Policy Update: July 2017

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Spotlight on the SRCD Policy Fellow

Yunsoo Park, Ph.D., is an Executive Branch Fellow whose placement is in the National Institute of Justice (NIJ) at the U.S. Department of Justice. Click [here](#) to learn more about her work, including her involvement in the Teen Dating Violence Interagency Workgroup.

Legislative Branch Updates

Fiscal Year 2018 Appropriations Update

After the fiscal year 2018 (FY18) appropriations process got off to a slow start due to the president's budget request not being released until late May, House and Senate Appropriations Committees are now working to pass as many of the 12 appropriations bills as possible prior to the August recess. The two chambers are taking very different approaches given the condensed timeline for the appropriations process this year. While the Senate is approaching the process more traditionally, and would prefer to pass each bill individually, House Republicans are currently planning to pursue multiple "minibus" bills that would each include several FY18 appropriations bills. The first of these multi-bill appropriations packages is expected to be brought to the floor before the August recess and would include the FY18 Defense, Energy-Water, Legislative Branch, and Military Construction-VA bills. House Republican leadership previously discussed the feasibility of passing all 12 FY18 bills as a single omnibus to speed up the process, but determined they did not have the votes to do so. Below are highlights from appropriations bills that are of particular relevance to SRCD member research.

House Commerce, Justice, Science Bill Advances Out of Committee

On July 13, the House Appropriations Committee marked up and approved [H.R. 3267](#), the Fiscal 2018 Commerce-Justice-Science Appropriations bill (CJS). The National Science Foundation (NSF), National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA), National Institute of Justice (NIJ), and the U.S. Census Bureau, along with a number of other federal statistical agencies, are funded through CJS. This CJS bill provides a total of \$54 billion in funding for FY18, \$4.8 billion more than what was requested in the president's budget, but still \$2.6 billion below what was enacted in the FY17 omnibus funding bill. Highlights of the House bill include:

- National Science Foundation (NSF): The bill includes \$7.3 billion for NSF, a cut of \$132.7 million compared to the FY17 funding level. The Research and Related Activities account is flat funded at the FY17 level.
- National Institute of Justice (NIJ): The bill includes \$38.5 million for the National Institute of Justice, a cut of \$1 million compared to the FY17 funding level.
- Census Bureau: The bill includes \$1.5 billion for the Census Bureau, an increase of \$37 million compared to the FY17 funding level.

Additional details are available [here](#) in the committee report. This bill now goes to the full House for consideration. The Senate is scheduled to consider its Commerce, Justice, Science bill for FY18 this week.

House Labor-HHS-Education Bill Advances Out of Committee

On July 19, the House Appropriations Committee marked up and approved the Labor-HHS-Education spending bill. The [draft Labor-HHS-Education spending bill](#) includes a total of \$156 billion in funding for FY18 and is the largest of the nondefense spending bills. The overall bill is a cut of \$5 billion from what was enacted in the FY17 omnibus. The Department of Education (ED) and Department of Labor (DOL) would face the bulk of the cuts, with ED funded at \$65.8 billion, a cut of \$2.4 billion from the FY17 enacted level, and DOL funded at \$10.8 billion, a cut of \$1.3 billion from the FY17 enacted level. The draft bill includes \$77.6 billion for the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), a cut of \$542.2 million from the FY17 enacted level. The funding for HHS includes a \$1.1 billion increase for the National Institutes of Health (NIH), which would be offset by large cuts to other health priorities, including family planning services and the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. Proposed institute level funding that may be of particular interest to SRCD members includes:

- Institute of Education Sciences (IES): The bill includes \$605 million for IES, providing the same level of funding as in FY17.
- *Eunice Kennedy Shriver* National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD): The bill includes \$1.4 billion for NICHD, an increase of \$21.4 million compared to the FY17 funding level.
- National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA): The bill includes \$1.1 billion for NIDA, an increase of \$16.6 million compared to the FY17 funding level.
- National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH): The bill includes \$1.6 billion for NIMH, an increase of \$23.5 million compared to the FY17 funding level.

Additional details are available [here](#) in the committee report. This bill now goes to the full House for consideration, although the timeline for future action is uncertain. It is likely that this legislation will be included in a multi-bill spending package to be considered after the August recess. The Senate Appropriations Committee has not yet considered a Labor-HHS-Education funding bill.

Senate Appropriations Subcommittee Hearing on National Institutes of Health Budget

On June 22, the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies held a National Institutes of Health (NIH) budget hearing to discuss the president's FY2018 budget request. Subcommittee Chairman Roy Blunt (R-MO) opened the hearing by highlighting the committee's bipartisan support of NIH and disapproval of the budget request, stating that he believes the committee will find the proposed cuts to NIH "unacceptable." Senator Blunt added that the request to cut \$7.4 billion, or about 22%, from the NIH budget "could cost nearly 90,000 jobs nationwide and result in a

\$15.3 billion loss in economic activity.” Subcommittee Ranking Member Patty Murray (D-WA) echoed Chairman Blunt’s disapproval of the request. She further emphasized that the committee would work together in a bipartisan manner to protect NIH funding. NIH Director Dr. Francis Collins was then called upon to give testimony. In his statement, Dr. Collins highlighted the importance of supporting basic science and early-and mid-career researchers in advancing the field of medicine. He provided several examples of fundamental exploration research currently being pursued across NIH, including research on cystic fibrosis and Alzheimer’s disease. Finally, Dr. Collins detailed the components of the Next Generation Research Initiative recently introduced by NIH to support early-and mid-career scientists.

Subcommittee members were given the opportunity to question Dr. Collins and the five NIH institute directors present: Dr. Douglas Lowy, Acting Director of National Cancer Institute; Dr. Gary Gibbons, Director of the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute; Dr. Anthony Fauci, Director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases; Dr. Richard Hodes, Director of the National Institute on Aging; and Dr. Nora Volkow, Director of the National Institute on Drug Abuse. Chairman Blunt asked about the administration’s proposal to eliminate the Fogarty International Center, which provides grants to international researchers and builds partnerships between health research institutions in the U.S. and abroad. Dr. Fauci noted that the center had played a vital role in the response to the Ebola epidemic; many of the investigators who had helped stop Ebola from reaching populous African countries like Nigeria had received grants from the center. He added that “the impact of Fogarty training has been extraordinary and we really need to continue it.” During the questioning period, several senators criticized the administration’s request to cap “indirect costs,” or facilities and administration costs associated with research, from about 30 percent of NIH grant awards to 10 percent. Dr. Collins explained that NIH is currently looking at areas in which administrative costs of institutions could be reduced, but added “I don’t think it would add up to an enormous difference in what we’re currently asking our grantee institutions to do.” When asked about caps to indirect costs for NIH internally, Dr. Collins stated “I’m having a hard time imagining how we would manage that,” as there is no other source of funding for the institute in areas such as building maintenance, utilities, and administrative services for human and animal subjects. Other topics addressed in the hearing included the proposed transfer of the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ) to NIH as a new institute; the general public’s understanding of NIH; the impact of the budget proposal on research and jobs in the United States; and current research within NIH on opioid addiction, Alzheimer’s disease, diabetes, and other diseases and disorders. To watch the full hearing and read witness testimony, click [here](#).

House Energy and Commerce Subcommittee Hearing on Safety Net Health Programs

On June 23, the Health Subcommittee of the House Energy and Commerce Committee held a hearing entitled “Examining the Extension of Safety Net Health Programs,” which focused largely on the Children’s Health Insurance Program (CHIP). Subcommittee Chairman Michael Burgess (R-TX) opened the hearing by noting that funding for CHIP and the Community Health Center Program expires at the end of this fiscal year and that “[this] committee has the responsibility of taking a critical look at how these programs operate and setting out a long-term path to funding and perhaps reauthorization.” He also provided background, explaining that CHIP “provides health care coverage to over 8 million children across the nation. Through flexible capped allotments to states, the program has been able to successfully support children while providing states with opportunities to tailor their respective programs as to best meet the needs of their populations.” However, he also noted that there are “concerns regarding the long-term sustainability of the program.” Subcommittee Ranking Member Gene Green (D-TX) stated in his opening remarks that “timely reauthorization is utterly critical” for both CHIP and community health centers. He also expressed concerns about the current attempts to scale back Medicaid and the resulting negative impacts on the Children’s Health Insurance Program, saying, “CHIP was designed to sit on top of a strong Medicaid program and reauthorizing it while simultaneously destroying Medicaid is simply unacceptable.” Opening statements were then given by the Chairman and Ranking Member of the full committee. Chairman Greg Walden (R-OR) stated that both CHIP and community health centers have enjoyed “strong bipartisan support for many years” and that both programs “play a significant role in the nation’s safety net for millions of Americans.” Ranking Member Frank Pallone (D-NJ) reiterated the points made by Representative Green, noting that three million children could lose coverage under the House’s American Health Care Act, and that it doesn’t make sense to gut Medicaid while reauthorizing CHIP since “our safety net is interconnected.” Both Representative Green and Representative Pallone yielded a significant portion of their time to their colleagues, giving Joseph P. Kennedy III (D-MA), Diana DeGette (D-CO), Kathy Castor (D-FL), and Ben Lujan (D-NM) the opportunity to give brief remarks as well. Witnesses emphasized the need for reauthorization and continued funding in order to ensure continuity of care for patients; CHIP’s strong record of success when it has robust and stable funding; the importance of CHIP as an additional safety net for children who do not qualify for Medicaid; and how Medicaid supports CHIP by covering children with the most significant health care needs. Witnesses included: Michael Holmes, Chief Executive Officer, Cook Area Health Services; Cindy Mann, Partner, Manatt Health; and Jami Snyder, Associate Commissioner for Medicaid/SCHIP Services, State of Texas, Health and Human Services Commission. To read witness testimonies and watch the full hearing, click [here](#).

House Human Rights Commission Hearing on Defending the Rights of Children and Youth Through Education

On June 28, the Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission of the House held a hearing entitled “Defending the Rights of Vulnerable Children and Youth through Education: A Focus on the Role of Self-Teaching and Play.” Co-Chair Randy Hultgren (R-IL) opened the hearing by calling attention to the particular vulnerability of children to human rights abuses. He presented the sobering statistic that “humanitarian emergencies and protracted crises currently disrupt the education of over 75 million children in 35 crisis-affected countries.” Representative Hultgren then pointed to the promise of global technology companies, NGOs, and other stakeholders in creating innovative solutions to foster education and development in these crisis-affected areas. Commission Co-Chair James P. McGovern (D-MA) added that the Universal Declaration of Human Rights states that every child has a right to education, and that education is a tool in empowerment. He echoed Representative Hultgren’s call to address the challenges of crises and conflicts depriving millions of children from receiving an education, and welcomed panelists to share their ideas of innovative educational models for the most vulnerable populations.

Christopher Fabian, Senior Advisor on Innovation in the UNICEF Office of Innovation, pointed to the promise of data science and information gathering in addressing the needs of the most vulnerable populations. He called attention to future possibilities for innovation at UNICEF, through initiatives such as Project Connect, an ongoing effort to map every school in the world with the goal of creating the logistical capacity to direct satellite connectivity and food to resource-poor schools. Finally he pointed to The Venture Fund, a UNICEF initiative that provides investments of \$50,000-100,000 to early stage, traditionally risky technology start-ups. The goal of the Venture Fund is to invest in technology that has the potential to create innovative, local solutions to complex problems facing vulnerable children. The panel discussion that followed featured three speakers on the ability of play to empower and educate vulnerable children. Witnesses addressed a variety of innovative strategies for this population in their testimonies, including introducing a nonprofit that refurbishes and installs old playgrounds in crisis-affected countries while also providing meals and teacher training; using play based learning to educate children on their rights; the promise of play for vulnerable children in relieving stress, restoring a sense of normalcy, and healing emotional wounds; promoting unity in children as opposed to competition and individualism; and asking congress to support innovative programs that promote collaboration and creative learning amongst children. Panelists included: Dennis Johnson, Founder & Chairman of Kids Around the World; Lindsay Groves, VP of Program Development and Evaluation, Right To Play International; and Davut (Hakan) Habip, Founding Chairperson of Science Heroes Association.

Click [here](#) to watch the full hearing and read witness testimony.

Congressional Briefing on Postsecondary Pathways

On June 26, the American Youth Policy Forum and Jobs for the Future hosted a congressional briefing entitled “Aligning Systems and Policies to Support Multiple Postsecondary Pathways.” Presenters discussed the need for coordination across systems and sectors to ensure the creation of supportive pathways to credential attainment and success for all students, and shared evidence-based strategies for designing systems and policies around student and workforce needs. The idea of providing structured and supported pathways that will lead to jobs with strong labor market value responds to the reality that while high school graduation and postsecondary enrollment rates have increased dramatically in recent years, many students who enroll in college or training programs leave before earning a credential. Presenters covered an array of topics focused on the importance of postsecondary pathways, including: using pathways to help students map their end goals and then enter the path to their career goals as quickly as possible; the use of dual enrollment programs to allow students to begin working toward a credential while still in high school at very little cost; the need to make sure students are not only ready for their first postsecondary job, but that they have also learned the skills to adapt to any future jobs; and the value of partnerships with employers, government entities, and other education providers. Additionally, the panelists highlighted several important features that they believe to be integral in pathways work. These include: credit transfers for students progressing from a 2-year to a 4-year college, data sharing agreements among partners, transparent information available to students about the payoffs of various pathways, and consistent language around the definition of pathways. A key theme throughout the briefing was that the pathways approach strongly emphasizes helping young people understand the full range of their postsecondary options, while also understanding the limitations of those options given their own personal career goals. Speakers included: Betsy Brand, Executive Director, American Youth Policy Forum; Michael Collins, Vice President, Building Educational Pathways, Jobs for the Future; Dr. Marcia Ballinger, President, Lorain County Community College; and Dr. Nathaniel Easley, Executive Director, Denver Scholarship Foundation.

Congressional Briefing on Education Budget Analysis

On July 13, the Committee for Education Funding (CEF) hosted a congressional briefing and panel discussion to mark the release of their annual budget book “Education Matters: Investing in America’s Future.” The event opened with brief remarks by CEF’s Executive Director as well as by the editor of this year’s budget

book. Education Matters provides background on the reasons for investing in education, along with information on how the president's fiscal year 2018 budget proposal would affect education programs and the students and educators that these programs aim to benefit. CEF staff provided an overview of the president's FY18 budget request with regard to education, noting that the president's budget proposes the [largest cut](#) to education funding in decades, before turning to the panel discussion. The panel included education stakeholders from across the U.S. with interest and expertise in a diverse range of education issues, including: special education, early childhood education, teacher training and coaching, federal financial aid, adult education, family engagement, and college and career readiness programs. Despite the wide range of issues that the panelists work on, there was universal agreement that if the president's budget were enacted, the funding cuts would dramatically impact all of these areas. Panelists provided examples of how the cuts would impact their work. As one example, the proposed cuts to Title II funds would eliminate coaching and professional development for new and struggling teachers. This would disproportionately impact already underserved districts, which typically have the largest number of teachers coming from alternative certification programs. Another example involved the dramatic cuts for federal work study programs, which would force students to rely more heavily on student loans and could deter some students from attending college at all. Panelists included: Phyllis Wolfram, Executive Director, Special Programs, Springfield (MO) Public Schools; Dr. Deborah Akers, Superintendent, Mercer County (WV) Public Schools; Heather Boutell, Director of Financial Aid, Bellarmine University; Jan McKeel, Executive Director, South Central Tennessee Workforce Alliance; and Rose Accera, President, New Jersey PTA.

Federal Reports and Requests

Reports

New Reports and Briefs from the Office of Planning, Research and Evaluation

Several new publications are available from the Office of Planning, Research and Evaluation (OPRE), Administration for Children and Families (ACF), U.S. Department of Health and Human Services:

(1) *Child and Partner Transitions among Families Experiencing Homelessness* This [brief](#) summarizes child and partner separations among families experiencing homelessness.

(2) *The San Diego County Bridge to Employment in the Healthcare Industry Program: Implementation and Early Impact Report* This [report](#) details the implementation and early impacts of a program in San Diego

designed to help low-income, low-skilled adults with occupational training that can lead to employment.

(3) *Adapting an Evidence-based Curriculum in a Rural Setting: The Early Impacts of Reducing the Risk in Kentucky* This [report](#) describes early impacts of Reducing the Risk, a comprehensive sex education program in rural Kentucky.

(4) *Understanding American Indian and Alaska Native Early Childhood Needs: The Potential of Existing Data* This [report](#) uses existing data to describe the population of American Indian and Alaska Native children and families and their participation in early childhood services, part of a larger effort to identify both met and unmet needs of this population.

New Publications from the Institute of Education Sciences

Several new publications are available from the Institute of Education Sciences (IES), U.S. Department of Education:

(1) *Live webcam coaching to help early elementary classroom teachers provide effective literacy instruction for struggling readers: The Targeted Reading Intervention* This [study review](#) from the IES What Works Clearinghouse reviews research on the Targeted Reading Intervention (TRI), a professional development intervention designed to help teachers develop the skills of struggling readers.

(2) *Early Millennials: The Sophomore Class of 2002 a Decade Later* This [statistical analysis](#) from the IES National Center for Education Statistics details key postsecondary education and employment milestones of the 2002 class of high school sophomores in 2012.

Resources

Request for Comment on *Healthy People 2030*

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services is currently accepting comments on the development of *Healthy People 2030*, a set of science-based national objectives developed each decade by the Healthy People Initiative in HHS' Office of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion. The goals of these objectives include preventing disease and improving the health of all Americans. Comments must be submitted by September 29, 2017. Please see the [full solicitation](#) for additional information.

Federal Funding Opportunities

This month's FFO highlights two forecasted Centers for Disease Control and Prevention funding opportunities. The purposes of these funding opportunities are to (1) obtain a better understanding of the factors contributing to vaccination disparities observed between adolescents living in rural areas compared to adolescents living in urban areas within the United States and implement and evaluate an intervention(s) and (2) to obtain a better understanding of the factors contributing to vaccination disparities observed between poor and non-poor young children, including, challenges in accessing vaccination services, quality of vaccination services received, Medicaid policy-related barriers, knowledge/attitudes/belief-related barriers, and competing priorities. Completed applications are estimated to be due by (1) February 1, 2018 and (2) January 18, 2018. Click [here](#) to read about these and other federal funding opportunities.