



# COSSA

CONSORTIUM OF SOCIAL SCIENCE ASSOCIATIONS

May 12, 2010

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FOR PUBLIC OPINION  
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ASSOCIATION

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ASSOCIATION

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AMERICAN LAW SCHOOLS

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LINGUISTIC SOCIETY  
OF AMERICA

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COMMUNICATION  
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RURAL SOCIOLOGICAL  
SOCIETY

SOCIETY FOR RESEARCH  
IN CHILD DEVELOPMENT

**HOWARD J. SILVER,**  
**PH.D.**  
*EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR*

**ALETHA C. HUSTON,**  
**PH.D.**  
*PRESIDENT*

Honorable Bart Gordon  
Chairman  
Committee on Science and Technology  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Gordon:

The Consortium of Social Science Associations (COSSA), which is the advocacy group for the social and behavioral sciences supported by over 110 scientific societies, professional associations, universities, and research centers and institutes, joins in endorsing H.R. 5116 and urges the House to pass it this week.

Our primary interest in the legislation is the reauthorization of the National Science Foundation (NSF) because it supports more than half of basic research conducted in the social and behavioral sciences. COSSA was instrumental in the creation of NSF's Social, Behavioral and Economic Sciences directorate (SBE) in 1991 and has strongly supported it ever since. Although we wish the authorization levels could have remained higher, we understand the necessity for fiscal responsibility and the reductions taken in the manager's amendment.

COSSA is grateful for the inclusion of ALL the sciences NSF supports in the definition of STEM and the recognition that a major purpose of science is to enhance individual and social well-being. We also endorse the strong emphasis on research activities on STEM education by NSF in the Education and Human Resources directorate and elsewhere in the Foundation. The need for evidence-based STEM activities is paramount if we are not to waste another effort in reforming our deficient education system.

COSSA also supports the enhancement of SBE's Science, Resources, Statistics division through its name change to the National Center for Science and Engineering Statistics and its augmented activities. This will allow it to play a more significant role in the federal statistical system.

Finally, since COSSA played a significant role in the development of the ethical and societal dimensions' provisions of the original National Nanotechnology Initiative, we are delighted with the increased emphasis on these activities, including environmental safety and health issues, in the current legislation.

COSSA appreciates all your efforts and those of your colleagues and staff in putting this important legislation together, moving it out of the committee, and onto the House floor.

To maintain the NSF as one of the world's premier basic research agencies, we again urge the House adoption of H.R. 5116.

Sincerely,

*Howard J. Silver*

Howard J. Silver, Ph.D.  
Executive Director