Fiscal Year 2008 Appropriations
Since the last public affairs update in March, very little progress has been made in Congress to resolve the Fiscal Year 2008 appropriations process. While the House has passed all 12 appropriations bills, the Senate has passed seven. Despite ongoing informal pre-conference staff negotiations, none of the bills have been reconciled by both chambers as conference reports and sent to the President. With the exception of the Military Construction-Veterans Affairs appropriations bill, President Bush has threatened to veto all other appropriations bills on the grounds they exceed his overall budget request by $23 billion. The first bill Congress plans to send to the President, as a test of his veto threat, is the Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education appropriations bill, which funds the National Institutes of Health (NIH) and the National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS).

It is a shame the FY 2008 appropriations process has culminated in this stalemate—particularly given how well our agencies of interest were poised to do in the various appropriations bills.

National Institutes of Health
The House-passed version of the Labor, Health and Human Services and Education appropriations bill provides the NIH with $29.650 billion, an increase of $750 million (2.6 percent) above the FY 2007 funding level. The Senate recommends NIH receive an even higher amount, $29.9 billion, an amount that is described as an increase of $1 billion (3.5 percent) over the FY 2007 level.

During floor consideration in both chambers, no amendments were offered that proposed raiding or increasing the NIH account. However, to get the Senate bill passed, its sponsors, Senators Harkin and Specter, agreed to drop language that would have expanded human embryonic stem cell research and curtailed abstinence education. The bill the Senate 75-19, which provides enough votes to override the President’s anticipated veto; however, it is not clear the House of Representatives would follow suit. When the House passed its version of the bill last June, 276-140, a number of members were absent.

Both the House and Senate bills recommend NIH Office of the Director receive an additional $110.9 million to support the ongoing National Children’s Study.

During Senate debate on the bill, PAA and APC signed onto letters organized by the Ad Hoc Group for Medical Research, urging Congress to ensure the final Labor, HHS bills includes the Senate recommended level of funding for the NIH. PAA and APC joined over 800 health, labor, and education organizations in signing onto a letter to the members of the Senate, urging them to pass the Labor-HHS bill as passed by the Senate Appropriations Committee.
It should be noted that both the House and Senate Appropriations Committees accepted report language in support of the demographic research programs at the NIH. This report language, which is adopted by the chambers’ respective appropriations committees and accompanies the bills to the floor, raises the visibility of these research programs and educates people within the agency and outside of the agency about their significance to the overall mission of the agencies in which they are located. (Attachment #1)

**National Center for Health Statistics**
Both the House and the Senate responded positively to requests from many organizations, including PAA, as members of the Friends of NCHS, to boost funding for NCHS. The agency had been flat funded for three years, which was forcing the agency to consider cuts to many of its major survey operations and its vital statistics program. In fact, the agency had only enough money in its FY 2008 request, to purchase 11 months of vital statistics data. Both the House and Senate recommended the agency receive $120 million in FY 2008, a $10 million increase over its FY 2007 level, and expressed its concern that this funding be used to restore credibility to the nation’s vital statistics program.

**Census Bureau**
The House of Representatives passed its version of the Commerce, Justice, Science appropriations bill, which funds the Census Bureau and National Science Foundation (H.R. 3093), in late July. The House bill allocates $1,222.2 million for the Census Bureau, roughly $8 million less overall than President Bush’s request of $1,230.2 million. Before it was considered by the full House of Representatives, the House Appropriations Commerce, Justice, Science Subcommittee had recommended the Bureau receive $19 million to continue the Survey of Income and Program Participation (SIPP) and $13 million to support an earlier launch of the 2010 census partnership program.

However, during mark up, the House Appropriations Committee also approved an amendment offered by Rep. Mike Honda (D-CA) and Rep. John Carter (R-TX) that shifted $30 million from the Census Bureau to a Justice Department program that helps states pay for incarcerating undocumented residents. The full House of Representatives subsequently approved an amendment offered by Rep. Shelley Moore Capito (R-WV) that shifted $10 million from the Periodic Censuses account to the Office of Justice Programs. According to the Census Bureau, consequences of these funding cuts include abandoning plans to improve measurement of service industries, eliminating several economic surveys and reports, eliminating the Survey of Business Owners and Self-Employed Persons (part of the Economic Census), scrapping the Economic Census in Puerto Rico and U.S. territories, and dropping plans to “geo-code” unassigned addresses to census blocks before nationwide address canvassing starts.

The Senate Appropriations Committee approved its version of the Commerce, Justice, Science bill (S. 1745) in July. Appropriators allocated $1,248.1 million for the Census Bureau, roughly $18 million above the President’s request. The $226.2 million earmarked for the bureau’s Salaries and Expenses (S&E) account includes $26 million more than requested to continue the SIPP, which the committee said would ensure a sample size of 45,000 in 26 states. The bill provides $1,020.4 million for Periodic
Censuses and Programs (the second main Census Bureau account), $7 million below the President’s request. The committee said in its report that it was not funding the American Community Survey Methods Panel, citing concerns expressed by the Government Accountability Office about the program’s costs and plan.

During floor consideration, the Senate accepted, by voice vote, an amendment offered by Senators Coburn (R-OK) and Carper (D-DE) that would withhold $10 million from the Census Bureau unless it submits to Congress a report within 120 of the bill’s enactment on the steps the agency will take to allow citizens to complete the decennial census and the American Community survey over the internet.

**National Science Foundation**
The NSF is faring well in both the House and Senate versions of the Commerce, Justice, Science appropriations bill. The Senate has recommended the agency receive $6.5 billion, $124 million above the President’s request, while the House recommended NSF receive $80 million more than the President’s request. Thus, the two chambers are close on NSF’s increase with some adjustments on research and education necessary. The Senate boosted NSF 10.8 percent over FY 2007, with a 21.9 percent increase for the Education and Human Resources Directorate. The House provided a 9.8 percent increase over FY 2007, but its enhancement was more geared to the Research and Related Activities account.

**USAID Family Planning/Reproductive Health Funding**
The overall family planning figure in the Foreign Operations bills is $461 million in the Senate bill and $441 million in the House bill. From this figure, the Office of Population and Reproductive Health is supported—the agency that funds the DHS and research important to PAA members.

**FY 2008 Continuing Resolution**
Because Fiscal Year 2007 officially ended on September 30, Congress was compelled to pass a continuing resolution (CR). The current CR expires on November 16. While CRs always pose a challenge for our agencies of interest, no agency is more affected by the terms of the current CR than the Census Bureau.

With final preparations for the 2008 Census Dress Rehearsal underway, and only weeks to go before the start of the 2007 Economic Census, the Census Bureau is struggling to pay for critical activities since the new fiscal year started on October 1st without a full-year Commerce, Justice, and Science Appropriations bill in place. Members of Congress involved with census funding and oversight say that the short term funding gap will force the Census Bureau to drop group quarters enumeration at Fort Bragg (NC) from the dress rehearsal, delay critical tests of new data collection systems for 2010, reduce address updating assistance to state and local governments by Regional Census Centers, and delay the start of the 2010 Census Communications Campaign contract.

The dress rehearsal is designed to replicate an actual census, with similar preparations, methods, promotional activities, and schedules. Local census offices in the two dress
rehearsal sites – San Joaquin County, CA, and nine counties surrounding Fayetteville, NC – are open, with hiring and training of census enumerators underway. Census forms must be mailed in March to ensure an accurate evaluation of census-like conditions. Congressional staff who have met with Census Bureau officials say that the agency likely would cancel the entire dress rehearsal, and cancel plans to use handheld computers for field data collection, if funding at 2007 levels continues after November 16. Congress would have to pass another CR to keep the federal government running if 2008 appropriations bills are not enacted by that date.

The Census Project, a coalition of 45 organizations, including PAA, sent a letter last week to Commerce Secretary Gutierrez, urging him to transfer funds to the Census Bureau to avoid any disruption of census preparations or delay in launching the Economic Census. Although he ultimately approved the $7 million transfer, the limit he was allowed under the law, the Bureau faces a $52 million gap in funding until November 16. At a hearing last week before the House Subcommittee on Information Policy, Census and National Archives, the Administration stated that it is “seriously considering” requesting an exemption for the Census Bureau should another CR become necessary.

The Public Affairs Office will send an action alert to PAA members the first week of November to urge an exemption for the Bureau if it is clear at that point another CR will have to be passed to keep the government operating.

**Agency Highlights**

**Implementation of NIH Reform Act of 2006**--NIH has formed working groups of senior officials to consider how the agency will implement the many sections of the NIH Reform Act of 2006. To ensure the agency includes information from the demographic research programs at NIA and NICHD, PAA and APC Presidents Barbara Entwisle and Michael White, sent a letter to Dr. Raynard Kington, Deputy Director of NIH and the Chair of the NIH Reform Act Implementation Group. The letter clarifies the intent of report language Congress adopted, urging the agency to include population research in the new biennial report to Congress. *(Attachment #2)* The agency positively responded to our letter and NIH staff members from programs at NIA and NICHD are being consulted.

**NIH Peer Review Activities**--NIH is considering possible changes to its extramural peer review system. A working group of the Advisory Committee to the NIH Director is holding meetings around the nation this fall to receive feedback from the community on the strengths and deficiencies of the current peer review process. On July 6, NIH issued a request for information (RFI) seeking input on six specific questions related to its peer review process. PAA and APC submitted comments, which largely emphasize what is working with the existing system. Some recommendations include ways to encourage the participation of more senior reviewers and to support junior investigators. *(Attachment #3)*
NAS Panel to review NCS Research Plan—On September 20 and 21, a panel convened by the National Academy of Sciences, at the request of NICHD, to review the National Children’s Study Research Plan, held its first meeting. Former PAA President, Dr. Sam Preston, is chairing the panel.

Administration nominates new Census Bureau Director—In June, the President Bush nominated Dr. Steven Murdock to be the next director of the Census Bureau. The current director, Charles Louis Kincannon, announced his resignation last November, saying he would step down after a new director is confirmed. Dr. Murdock is a professor and holds the Lutcher Brown Distinguished Chair in Demography at the University of Texas at San Antonio (UTSA); he previously taught in the Department of Rural Sociology at Texas A & M University. Dr. Murdock directs the Institute for Demographic and Socioeconomic Research and heads the Texas State Data Center at UTSA. He holds a Ph.D. in Demography and Sociology and has authored many research articles and technical reports. Knowledgeable congressional sources indicate that the committee is likely to hold a confirmation hearing in early November, with Sen. Tom Carper (D-DE), chairman of the Subcommittee on Federal Financial Management, Government Information, Federal Services, and International Security (which oversees Census Bureau programs), chairing. (Sen. Joseph Lieberman, D-CT, and Sen. Susan Collins, R-ME, are the chairman and ranking minority member, respectively, of the full Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee.)

PAA has written the Senate leaders and the members of the Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee to express its support for Dr. Murdock’s nomination and to urge a speedy confirmation process (Attachment #4).

Congressional Briefings and Meetings
Census Meetings--On May 9, Dr. Barbara Entwisle, PAA President, Ms. Paula Schneider, PAA member, and Ms. Mary Jo Hoeksema, met with Congressman David Price (D-NC) and other congressional staff to discuss funding for the Census Bureau in Fiscal Year 2008. The group also met with Mr. John Kilvington, Staff Director, Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Subcommittee on Federal Financial Management, Government Information, Federal Services, and International Security, which has oversight of the Census Bureau. The purpose of this meeting was to discuss the subcommittee’s interests during the 110th Congress.

Global Aging Briefing—On May 21, PAA and APC and the Consortium of Social Science Associations, in conjunction with the Senate Special Committee on Aging, sponsored a briefing on Capitol Hill for senior congressional staff, entitled “Why Population Aging Matters: A Global Perspective.” The following speakers participated in the briefing, Dr. Joseph Chamie, Dr. Lisa Berkman, Dr. Adele Hayutin, and Dr. James Smith. Their presentations are posted at: http://www.cossa.org/seminars/2007/Population_Aging.pdf

NHIS reception—On June 21, PAA and APC cosponsored a reception at the U.S. Botanical Gardens in Washington, D. C., commemorating the 50th anniversary of the
National Health Interview Survey (NHIS). Senior CDC, NCHS, and Census Bureau officials, as well as members of Congress and congressional staff, attended this event, which featured a series of posters highlighting major advances from the survey.

Attachment #1

**U.S. House of Representatives and U.S. Senate Commend NIH Demographic Research Programs in Fiscal Year 2008 Appropriations Reports**

During the summer of 2007, the U.S. House of Representatives and Senate Committees on Appropriations, Subcommittees on Labor, Health and Human Services and Education, printed reports (#110-231 and #110-107 respectively) to accompany their versions of the Fiscal Year 2008 appropriations bill for the Departments of Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education. The bills include funding for two agencies very important to the Population Association of America and Association of Population Centers—the National Institutes of Health and the National Center for Health Statistics. The reports included provisions commending the demographic research programs at the National Institute on Aging and the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development.

**Senate Report, #110-107**

**National Institute on Aging**

*Demographic and Economic Research* - The Committee urges the NIA to sustain its commitment to the Demography of Aging centers program and continue its current support of the economic and demographic components of the Roybal Centers for Applied Gerontology. Finally, the Committee commends the NIA for elevating the dialogue surrounding global aging issues by hosting with the Department of State the Summit on Global Aging.

**National Institute of Child Health and Human Development**

*Demographic Research* - The Committee applauds the NICHD for its strong support of demographic research, which has resulted in a greater understanding of such topics as family dynamics and immigration. The NICHD is encouraged to provide additional resources on research that addresses the future of America's families, including the forces affecting birth rates and family investments in children. The Institute should also actively support opportunities for interdisciplinary research into the complex socioeconomic and biological mechanisms that produce health disparities within our population. To ensure the continued vitality of this program, the Committee urges the NICHD to maintain its levels of investment in demographic training and infrastructure support.
National Institute on Aging

Demographic and Economic Research--The Committee encourages NIA to sustain its commitment to demography of aging centers program. These centers coordinate key data collection and dissemination activities that benefit the entire field of population aging research and inform public policy issues, such as reform of federal entitlement and health care programs. The Committee also congratulates NIA for elevating the dialogue surrounding global aging issues by hosting with the Department of State the Summit on Global Aging.

National Institute of Child Health and Human Development

Demographic research—The Committee applauds NICHD for supporting demographic research. As a result of this support, important strides have been made in our understanding of family dynamics—especially how these factors influence marriage and the health and development of children. In addition, interdisciplinary demographic research has uncovered clues regarding the causes of health disparities across racial, ethnic, educational, and income groups. The Committee encourages NICHD to maintain its levels of investment in demographic training and infrastructure support and to support opportunities for interdisciplinary research into the complex environmental and biological mechanisms that produce health disparities.
May 31, 2007

Raynard Kington, M.D., Ph.D.
Deputy Director
National Institutes of Health
Building 1, Room 126
Bethesda, Maryland   20892

Dear Dr. Kington:

Given your role as chairman of the National Institutes of Health (NIH) Reform Act Implementation Working Group, we are writing to clarify the intent of important language our organizations worked with the Office of Congressman Fred Upton to include in the congressional report that accompanied the act.

House Report 109-687 includes an extensive section on the new NIH Biennial Report to Congress. On page 24, the House Energy and Commerce Committee states the following:

“The Director should also include in the report information about population research activities and advances.”

The Committee included this language to ensure NIH provides information about the demographic and economic research it supports—particularly through the Demographic and Behavioral Sciences Branch at the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development and the Behavioral and Social Sciences Research program at the National Institute on Aging. Recognizing the connection between demography and health, the Committee believes Congress should know about research NIH is supporting to understand the demographic causes and consequences of population change. This research provides a foundation for understanding changes in the health and well being of our nation’s people and, therefore, needs to be an essential component of the new NIH Biennial Report to Congress.

We hope this information is helpful. Please do not hesitate to contact PAA/APC Public Affairs Specialist, Mary Jo Hoeksema, if we can be of further assistance.

Sincerely,

Barbara Entwisle, Ph.D.   Michael White, Ph.D.
President
Population Association of America

President
Association of Population Centers

cc: Dr. Lana Skirboll, NIH Office of Science Policy
    Dr. David Abrams, NIH Office of Behavioral and Social Sciences
    Dr. Richard Hodes, NIA
    Dr. Duane Alexander, NICHD
    Ms. Jane Williams, Office of Congressman Upton
Attachment #3

September 7, 2007

Norka Ruiz Bravo, Ph.D.
Deputy Director for Extramural Research
National Institutes of Health
Building 1, Room 144
Bethesda, Maryland 20892

Dear Dr. Bravo:

On behalf of the members of the Population Association of America (PAA) and Association of Population Centers (APC), we are writing to share comments PAA and APC recently sent to NIH in response to Request for Information (RFI): NIH System to Support Biomedical and Behavioral Research and Peer Review, #NOT-OD-07-084. Given the significance of this exercise and the implications any changes to the current peer review system could have for PAA/APC members who depend on NIH support, we want to ensure our comments are received.

The Population Association of America (PAA) (<www.popassoc.org>) is a professional organization of over 3,000 individual members who conduct research on the health and socioeconomic implications of population change. PAA members include demographers, sociologists, economists, health scientists, and statisticians. The Association of Population Centers (APC) (<www.popcenters.org>) is an organization comprised of over 30 universities and research groups nationwide whose mission includes fostering collaborative demographic research and data sharing and translating basic population research for policy makers.

We hope our comments help to inform this ambitious undertaking. Please do not hesitate to contact PAA/APC Public Affairs Specialist, Mary Jo Hoeksema, if we can be of further assistance.

Sincerely,

[Signature]
Barbara Entwisle, Ph.D.  Michael White, Ph.D.
President  President
Population Association of America  Association of Population Centers

cc: Dr. Toni Scarpa, Director, NIH Center for Scientific Review
Attachment #4

PAA/APC response to NIH RFI (#NOT-OD-07-084) on Peer Review

Challenges of NIH System of Research Support
- The ratio of awards to meritorious applications is too low. Long-term funding increases are needed to address this critical problem. Given tight paylines, it’s hard for scientists, particularly junior investigators, to compete in the current environment.

- NIH should give particular attention to funding mechanisms most accessible to junior investigators, including post-doctoral fellowship awards (F series), career development awards (K series), and small grants (especially the R03’s). NIH should consider expanding the K99 mechanism after it has had time to be evaluated. It is important to offer a diverse array of mechanisms to support a wide variety of potential career paths.

- Post-doctoral support mechanisms need more flexibility so that some applicants can balance teaching and research responsibilities in research settings where some teaching is required or contributes to their career growth.

- NIH should increase awareness of funding mechanisms—especially among behavioral and social scientists. The current mechanisms favor scientists from traditional biomedical research fields.

Challenges of NIH Peer Review Process
- Ensuring that the composition of study sections is sufficiently diverse to review complex, interdisciplinary research applications.

- Reviewers don’t always understand the objective of the various funding mechanisms.

- Attracting more senior scientists to review.

Solutions to Challenges
- Study sections with diverse interdisciplinary composition need ways of building strong working relationships. Off-site reviews conducted via secure chat rooms, for example, do not help to achieve this objective. We want to underscore the importance and value of face-to-face communications for building strong working relationships within study sections.

- NIH should continue to invest in a rigorous application triage process and to provide reviewers with written reviews several days prior to meeting. By doing so, study sections will function more efficiently.
When considering possible technologies to assist the study sections, consider how well these changes may serve the different cultures of the study sections and might affect the task of integrating the review judgments of scientists from diverse disciplines.

To recruit more senior scientists, promote strategies that increase the likelihood of single-day study section meetings and allowing flexible submission deadlines for those who participate.

Do not reduce the size of review panels to save money if the scientific rigor of reviews, in particular interdisciplinary reviews, would be compromised.

Compromising the quality of review in other ways for the sake of saving money, is penny wise and pound-foolish.

Core Values of NIH Peer Review Process
- We affirm the core value of the existing peer review system.

We ask that CSR proceed cautiously with changes to the peer review system. Demographic research has been well served by a system with large, interdisciplinary review panels, detailed research applications and face-to-face reviewer interaction. The basic study section model needs to be reviewed periodically as fields evolve and emerge—particularly, if the agency wants to continue to support interdisciplinary research.

The system should encourage study sections to develop effective working relationships.

Study sections should have broad representation, reflecting the diversity of the sciences NIH supports.

Peer Review Criteria and Scoring
- The basic criteria are good as is.

We underscore CSR’s decision to emphasize innovation as part of the review process.

Career Pathways
- Refer to comments about junior investigators under item #1.
August 15, 2007

The Honorable Joseph I. Lieberman
Chair
Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs
United States Senate
340 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC  20510

The Honorable Susan M. Collins
Ranking Member
Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs
United States Senate
340 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC  20510

Dear Senator Lieberman and Senator Collins:

On behalf of the over 3,000 members of the Population Association of America (PAA) and over 30 population research centers comprising the Association of Population Centers (APC), we are writing to express our support for the nomination of Dr. Steve Murdock to be the next Director of the United States Census Bureau and to urge the Senate to confirm his nomination in a timely manner.

The Population Association of America (PAA) (www.popassoc.org) is a professional organization of over 3,000 individual members who conduct research on the implications of population change. PAA members include demographers, sociologists, economists, health scientists, and statisticians. The Association of Population Centers (APC) (www.popcenters.org) is an organization comprised of over 30 universities and research groups nationwide whose mission includes fostering collaborative demographic research and data sharing and translating basic population research for policy makers.

PAA and APC members rely on accessible data produced by the Census Bureau to conduct their research. Our members use surveys conducted by the Bureau, including the Current Population Survey, Survey of Income and Program Participation, and American Community Survey, as well as data from the decennial censuses to analyze and monitor socioeconomic trends, migration and immigration patterns, and the changing demographics of the American population. As prominent users of the Bureau’s data, our members are frequently asked to serve on the agency’s advisory groups, including the Census Advisory Committee of Professional Associations. Therefore, we have a vested interest in ensuring effective, knowledgeable managers who possess appropriate, outstanding scientific and administrative expertise lead the Bureau. We are confident Dr. Murdock is well qualified to lead the Bureau—
especially at this critical juncture when preparations for the 2010 Census are underway.

Dr. Murdock has a Ph.D. in Demography and Sociology from the University of Kentucky and is the author of 12 books and more than 150 articles and technical reports on the implications of current and future demographic and socioeconomic change. In recognition of his academic achievements and service to the Texas A&M University system, which he served between 1997 and 2004, Dr. Murdock was named a “Regents Professor.” In 2004, he was appointed the Lutcher Brown Distinguished Chair in Management Science and Statistics in the Department of Management Science and Statistics at the University of Texas San Antonio. In addition, he was appointed head of the University’s Institute of Demographic and Socioeconomic Research.

His credentials as a respected researcher have lent themselves well to the policy-related positions Dr. Murdock has simultaneously held throughout his career. Since 1980, Dr. Murdock has been the Director of the Texas State Data Center and liaison for the Federal/State Cooperative Programs for Population Estimates and Projections. These are official partnerships with the Census Bureau to disseminate census data and develop both state and federal population estimates and projections. In 2001, Texas Governor Rick Perry appointed Dr. Murdock the first State Demographer of Texas. These experiences, in particular, have honed Dr. Murdock's skills as a manager and given him numerous opportunities to inform current policy debates.

In light of Dr. Murdock’s exceptional record as a researcher and administrator, we believe the United States Senate should act quickly to confirm his appointment as the next Director of the U.S. Census Bureau. Delaying consideration of his nomination will leave the Bureau with a serious leadership gap during this momentous phase of planning for the 2010 Census. We hope the Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs will schedule a nomination hearing after the congressional summer recess. Further, we hope Senate leaders will commit to vote on his nomination this fall.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter. Please do not hesitate to contact us if we can provide any additional information regarding Dr. Murdock’s nomination.

Sincerely,

Barbara Entwisle, Ph.D.  Michael White, Ph.D.
President     President
Population Association of America  Association of Population Centers
cc: Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid
    Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell
    Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs members