

Washington Insider

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Restrictions on NSF Political Science Program Reversed

Thank you and congratulations to our membership on the successful reversal of the restrictions imposed by the Coburn amendment that dramatically limited the substantive scope of the National Science Foundation Political Science Program. This accomplishment marks an important victory against congressional efforts to infringe on the independence of the National Science Foundation (NSF) and the national science agenda—and particularly on political science. Still, the Coburn amendment was just one battle among many in recent years, and will not be the last. Indeed, immediately on the horizon for political and all social science is the NSF reauthorization through the Frontiers in Innovation, Research, Science and Technology (FIRST) Act in the House (and through America Creating Opportunities to Meaningfully Promote Excellence in Technology, Education, and Science (COMPETES) Act in the Senate), where efforts are underway to limit the scope of the NSF Directorate for Social, Behavioral, and Economic Sciences (SBE). And there are other threats to political science, such as decreased funding for foreign language and overseas training programs. To confront these important issues, APSA works closely with its members and has strong relationships with other associations and organizations, and with congressional staff and other allies. As we explain in this brief summary of our 2013 strategy and activities, a firm foundation exists for the road ahead.

APSA Strategy

Among APSA's core objectives is defending the legitimacy of scholarly research in politics and government, and our decade's long collaboration with other social sciences intensified with the passage of the Coburn amendment in March 2013. To confront this newest challenge, APSA developed a multifaceted strategy for repealing the Coburn amendment and preventing future restrictions on federal funding for political science. One element of the strategy was to expand our engagement with the broad community of science associations and higher education organizations. For more than 30 years, APSA has been a governing member of the Consortium of Social Science Associations (COSSA), an umbrella organization that APSA helped found with the mission of advocating for the interests of the social science community. Moreover, APSA has been a member of and held leadership roles in the American Association for the Advancement of Science for many years. Building on these relationships and developing new ones with organizations such as the Coalition for National Science Funding (CNSF), whose mission includes "increasing the national investment in the National Science Foundation's research

and education programs," has strengthened APSA's connection to the physical and biological sciences. In May 2013, APSA participated in the annual CNSF Exhibition and Reception on Capitol Hill, an opportunity for highlighting research funded by NSF. We specifically chose work that would have been excluded from funding under the Coburn amendment. APSA members Martha Kropf (University of North Carolina at Charlotte) presented her coauthored research (with David Kimball, University of Missouri at St. Louis), "Better Ballot Design: How Design Features Influence the Ability of Voters to Cast Their Votes." Members of Congress and staff, including fellow political scientist Representative David Price (D, NC-4) spoke with Martha about her work.

Another element of the strategy was to increase our presence on the Hill. We hired Kennelly Associates, a lobbying firm with personal connections to Senator Mikulski (D, MD), chairwoman of the Senate Appropriations Committee who did (and would) play a central role in funding decisions for NSF. The firm was charged with explaining to the chairwoman the devastating impact of the restrictions imposed by the Coburn amendment and urging her to exclude any similar language from future legislation. As a result of these conversations, in July 2013 the Senate Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, and Science (CJS) reported a "clean" FY2014 appropriations bill that did not include any restrictions on the NSF Political Science Program.

Also, APSA committed additional staff resources to more direct engagement with Congress through office meetings and other events on Capitol Hill. Independently and with our SBE colleagues, we have met with numerous staff in the House and Senate, including in the offices of political scientists such as Representatives Lipinski (D, IL-3), Price (D, NC-4) and Gibson (R, NY-19) to educate and develop support for federal funding of political science and SBE more broadly. APSA organized a congressional briefing on the report released by Jane Mansbridge's presidential task force on negotiating to agreement in politics to coincide with the deadline for the 2014 budget. We arranged for Representatives Titus (D, NV-1) and Price (D, NC-4) to send out a "Dear Colleague" letter to encourage attendance by their colleagues and staff, and there was standing room only for the discussion among scholars, reporters, Congressional Research Service staff, and congressional staff of this timely and relevant topic. We are organizing additional briefings and events for congressional staff as part of this strategy to increase APSA's presence on the Hill.

The final component of the strategy was an expansion of APSA's grassroots advocacy. In anticipation of major legislative votes or other action, we informed and activated our members through e-mail

alerts; a portal provided by the National Humanities Association (NHA) created the opportunity for APSA members to communicate easily with their congressional delegation about their views on funding for the NSF Political Science Program. In addition, APSA engaged department chairs, university presidents, and campus public information officers in support of federally funded political science research. And we dramatically improved our online and social media presence through an overhauled advocacy webpage that includes legislative updates, an advocacy toolkit, and relevant information on various issues of concern to political science and regular Twitter and Facebook updates.

Challenges Ahead

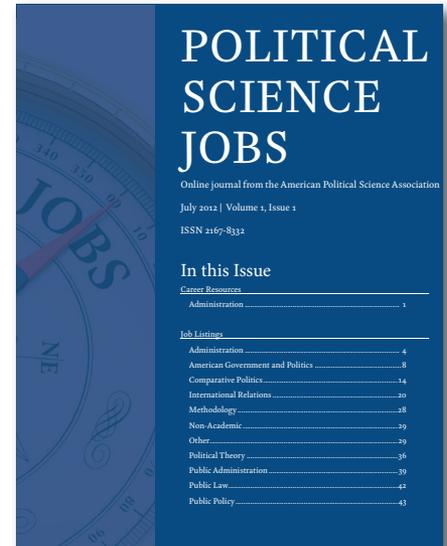
The successful resolution to the Coburn amendment is worthy of celebration. The challenges continue, however, on several fronts. With the social and behavioral sciences community, APSA is protecting political science and the NSF SBE Directorate from other legislative threats that include House Majority Leader Eric Cantor's (R, VA) remarks at the American Enterprise Institute in March 2013 that federal research funds should be redirected from

social science, singling out political science; the House FIRST Act of 2013, which may include language that would severely limit the authority of SBE and the funding of SBE projects; and the House High Quality Research Act (HQRA), which includes language that would, among other things, require the Director of NSF to certify that all awards are in the interest of the United States scientific agenda, are of the finest quality, and are not duplicative of research already being conducted by NSF or any other federal scientific agency. Although these bills are in draft form only as of this writing, they represent new assaults on the independence and integrity of the peer-review process at NSF and pose grave challenges to the vitality of the nation's science agenda.

Other threats to political science exist, among them decreased funding of education programs for foreign language and overseas training supported by Title VI of the Higher Education Act and the Fulbright-Hayes programs at the US Department of Education. And higher education issues like student loan programs have implications for political science as well. With the support of our membership and the scientific community, APSA will continue to advocate for the many important issues facing our discipline.

Political Science Jobs eJournal from APSA

In July 2012, APSA launched a new monthly and online journal focused on jobs in political science. *Political Science Jobs* contains active job listings from APSA's eJobs database. The combination of the new online journal and the daily APSA eJobs database provides a continued platform for a transparent, efficient, and ethically grounded political science labor market. APSA has maintained an open academic job market for many years, and this new journal forms the next phase of these efforts.



Format and Frequency

Political Science Jobs includes all active positions in a monthly downloadable PDF and link to the searchable eJobs system online.

APSA Members

APSA members (individuals and departments) have free access to the online journal as a benefit of membership. All members also receive free access to the daily PDF of eJobs listings.

Political Science Jobs Fulfills Hiring Requirements

Political Science Jobs replaces the former *PS Supplement* of job listings. The April 2012 *PS Supplement* was the last published volume since establishing the journal in 2008 to fulfill federal regulatory requirements tied to international hiring requirements. These federal rules recently changed to recognize online or web-based professional journals as an eligible outlet.

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