



June 22, 2011

Dear Colleagues,

The House Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice & Science (CJS) is considering changing the 2012 appropriation to eliminate the Social, Behavioral & Economic Sciences (SBE) directorate at the NSF, which includes the Linguistics Program. The Consortium of Social Science Associations (COSSA), a coalition to which the LSA belongs supporting Federal funding for the social sciences, is encouraging its members to write to their House Representatives and Senators, urging the House to continue to support the human sciences at NSF. Having had the privilege of serving recently as one of the Assistant Directors of the NSF, heading up the SBE directorate, I want to endorse COSSA's request, believing that eliminating SBE would be disastrous for the human sciences in the US and for linguistics in particular.

So the LSA is now encouraging its members to write to their House Representatives and US Senators, ideally before the CJS Subcommittee meeting on 7 July, or before the full House Appropriations Committee meeting on 13 July, and at least before the floor discussion scheduled for the week of 25 July. You may want to copy Subcommittee Chair Frank Wolf R-VA and Ranking Member Chakah Fattah D-PA and perhaps other members of the Subcommittee (<http://www.appropriations.house.gov/Subcommittees/Subcommittee/?IssueID=34794>) and Appropriations Committee Chair Harold Rogers (R-KY) and Ranking Member Norm Dicks (DWA) (<http://www.appropriations.house.gov>). You can find contact information for your representative using the "Write Your Representative" feature at <https://writerep.house.gov/writerep/welcome.shtml>, and you will find a list of Senators, sortable by state, at http://www.senate.gov/general/contact_information/senators_cfm.cfm.

We all lead busy lives and if you prefer to send something more or less ready made I suggest something along the lines of the letter available at <http://www.lsadc.org/info/NSFSBEletter.pdf> or the one kindly provided by Steven Pinker and available at <http://www.lsadc.org/info/alternateNSFletter.pdf>. You may cut and paste the text from these letters (make sure the formatting has copied appropriately), and if you have the opportunity to elaborate and to tell your representatives something about our field, you may want to address one or more of the following points:

- a. some of us study language as a branch of biology (biolinguistics), in such a way that the field has become a lead science within the cognitive sciences more broadly and within emerging neuroscience.
- b. much work in linguistics feeds work on applied linguistics, which is the basis for the major worldwide industry of second language teaching.
- c. with the development of new communication technologies, work in computational linguistics has been playing an increasing role in the development of new technologies as we seek more effective automated techniques of text analysis, including machine translation.
- d. work in linguistics has become important in developing therapies for aphasia and language disorders in patients suffering from strokes, Alzheimer's and other diseases.
- e. study of language variation has been instrumental in thwarting the extermination of some endangered languages and in addressing social and political issues in matters of language use.
- f. work on the acquisition of language, both first and second language acquisition, has played a leading role in the learning sciences generally.
- g. linguists have been funded by directorates such as Computer & Information Science & Engineering (CISE), Education & Human Resources (EHR) and Engineering, large-scale crossdirectorate programs like Cyber-Enabled Discovery and Innovation (CDI), and more focused inter-directorate programs like CreativeIT and Social Computational Systems (SoCS); none of this would happen without SBE and the Linguistics Program.

Support will be particularly valuable if your representatives are from the Republican party. Furthermore, you might strengthen your argument by pointing to NSF-supported work being conducted at a university in the representative's area.

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