The American Political Science Association appreciates the work of the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, and Science to support the National Science Foundation (NSF) and other agencies, but expresses its opposition to the FY 2016 Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act in its current form due to provisions that harm social science research and the broader national science agenda.

Among other troubling provisions, report language for the bill prioritizes funding away from NSF’s Directorate for Social, Behavioral, and Economic Sciences, carrying threat of heavy cuts to the social sciences and devastating consequences for our national science agenda. Prioritizing funding among directorates also undermines NSF’s longstanding and highly effective practice of setting investment priorities based on the organization’s scientific expertise and on its world-renowned merit review process. Other harmful provisions in the bill threaten to undercut the strength of the American Community Survey and other resources for social science research.

The SBE Directorate comprises less than 5% of the total NSF budget, but NSF support has contributed to a majority of the federal funds for academic basic research in these disciplines. The insights of the SBE disciplines, including political science, are crucial to maintaining America’s global standing as an innovation powerhouse. Political science research on topics such as understanding democracy, fighting terrorism, and promoting disaster relief is an integral part of a robust science program that supports America’s interests and competitive strength.

APSA urges lawmakers to support a strong national science program through appropriations that advance all scientific disciplines.

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Founded in 1903, the American Political Science Association is the leading professional organization for the study of political science and serves more than 13,000 members in more than 80 countries. With a range of programs and services for individuals, departments, and institutions, APSA brings together political scientists from all fields of inquiry, regions, and occupational endeavors within and outside academia to deepen our understanding of politics, democracy, and citizenship throughout the world.