As in the House, Senate Rejects Trump NIH Funding, Policy, and Structure Proposals

On September 7 and without a Budget Resolution, the Senate Appropriations Committee passed an FY2018 LHHS spending bill—approved the prior day by the Senate LHHS Appropriations Subcommittee—that totals $164.1 billion in discretionary funding for the Departments of Labor, Health and Human Services (DHHS), and Education. The bill, which is $3 billion above the FY2017 enacted level and $27.5 billion above President Trump’s budget request, provides $79.4 billion in discretionary funding for the DHHS and was described by Subcommittee Chair Roy Blunt (R-MO) and Ranking Member Patty Murray (D-WA) as a bipartisan effort—similar to that in FY2017. Details of the bill and their comparison to the House bill and President’s Trump proposal appear below:

- The $2 billion Senate-proposed NIH increase over FY2017 to $36.1 billion reflects a 1.86 billion or 5.4 percent increase to NIH base funding. The remaining $144 million of the increase reflects funding for 21st Century Cures Act initiatives, bringing its total funding within the bill to $496 million, as designated by the Act. The House’s proposed NIH funding at $35.2 billion, or an increase of $11 billion over FY2017, reflects an increase of $943 million or 2.8 percent on base funding. The House bill also includes Cures funding by $144 million to a total of $496 million. The President’s proposal cut NIH by $7.6 billion, or 21 percent, below enacted FY2017.
- The Senate bill funds NEI at $758.6 million, an increase of $25.9 million, or 3.5 percent, over FY2017—the second year at this percentage increase. The House bill proposed a 1.5 percent increase in NEI funding to $743.9 million. The President proposed NEI funding of $549.8 million, or a $183 million cut.
- Both the Senate and House bills maintain the Extramural Salary Cap at Executive Level (EL) IL which is $185,000.
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- Both the Senate and House bills maintain the Extramural Salary Cap at Executive Level (EL) IL which is $185,000.
- Both the Senate and House bills include a provision requiring the NIH to continue reimbursing grantee research institutions at current rates for Facilities and Administrative (indirect) costs. The President proposed to limit these indirect costs to 10 percent.
- Both the Senate and House bills retain the Fogarty International Center and maintain the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ) as a separate agency—in the Senate it is flat-funded, while the House cuts AHRQ funding that reflects Affordable Care Act activities. The President proposed to eliminate Fogarty and move AHRQ into the NIH.
- The Senate bill directs NIH to begin a pilot program to determine the adequacy of a fetal tissue donor network for supporting all-related clinical research from human fetal tissue donated solely from stillbirths and spontaneous abortion. The House bill states that none of the funds made available may be used to conduct or support research using human fetal tissue if such tissue is obtained pursuant to an induced abortion.

NAEVR issued a statement expressing appreciation for the Senate’s proposed NIH funding increase, especially thanking Chairman Blunt and Ranking Member Murray for emphasizing the importance of increases for the Institutes and Centers (I/Cs), such as the NEI.