May 11, 2015

NEED FOR IMMEDIATE ACTION BY U.S. ANTHROPOLOGISTS

Dear fellow members of the American Anthropological Association, and in particular those of you who reside in the United States:

The National Science Foundation (NSF) research funding for the social sciences is threatened with a **45% cut** in a bill that will be debated on the House floor during the week of May 18. While the cut would be a blow to social sciences in general, **anthropology would be hit especially hard**. Therefore, if you vote in the U.S., I urge you to write to your member of Congress **before** that debate.

You can do this **easily right now**. The Consortium of Social Sciences has offered a site that explains how. Go to the [COSSA Action Center to sign up and take action](http://www.cossa.org/) by asking your representative to oppose the **America COMPETES Act of 2015 (H.R. 1806)**.

Like last year’s version of this legislation (the FIRST Act), this bill sets arbitrary funding levels for NSF’s research directorates and would impose a massive 45% cut on the Social, Behavioral, and Economic Sciences Directorate (SBE) – effectively eliminating grant funding for anthropology and the other social sciences.

A full analysis of the bill can be found [here](http://www.cossa.org/).

Anthropologists must not sit on the sidelines while issues as vital as sustaining the major source of U.S. federal funding for basic anthropological research are being debated. Unfortunately, many public officials do not feel that basic research is a critical public good. It can make a difference when they hear from their constituents how important that research actually is. For those of us outside the U.S., this is also an important issue, since the United States is not the only government to attack the worth of basic social science research, and what happens in the U.S. does connect to what happens elsewhere.

In addition, I suggest that you contact your university officials or your private or public sector employer to ensure they are focusing on this threat to basic social science research and are letting members of Congress know the potential harm the Representatives are doing to U.S. knowledge production capacity.

Thank you for your support,

Monica Heller
President, American Anthropological Association