APSA Statement on Impact of President’s 2018 Budget Request on Political Science

The American Political Science Association strongly opposes the cuts to federal funding for the humanities and social sciences proposed in the president's budget request for fiscal year 2018. The budget includes severe cuts to programs that support political science research and education. The White House “proposes to begin shutting down the National Endowment for the Humanities” in 2018 and requests no funds for the Title VI and Fulbright-Hays international education programs at the Department of Education. It proposes cuts of over 10 percent to the National Science Foundation. The budget request follows an earlier budget blueprint, released in March, that outlined the elimination of funding for the NEH and broad cuts to other programs.

The NEH, which the budget slates for a 72 percent cut from FY 2017 levels in anticipation of closing the agency, is one of the largest humanities funders in the United States and supports research, education, and other projects across a range of disciplines, including political science. According to a statement on the NEH website, “As NEH awaits Congressional action on the President’s proposed budget, the agency is continuing normal operations and will be making the next round of FY 2017 awards following the meeting of the National Council in July.” Title VI and Fulbright-Hays programs at the Department of Education support students and educators at US universities in developing expertise in critical areas around the world, including knowledge of world languages and cultures. The budget request also cuts federal funding for other programs that support political science scholarship. The Woodrow Wilson Center for International Scholars, which relies on a combination of public and private funds, faces a 28.8 percent decrease in funding in the budget, in preparation for future elimination of federal support.

The president’s budget reduces funding for the National Science Foundation by about 11 percent overall and at approximately 10.6 percent for research and development (compared to FY 2016 enacted levels) at the independent agency. The budget proposes cuts to all directorates within NSF, starting at a 7.1 percent cut for the Biological Sciences directorate and including a 10.4 percent cut to the Social, Behavioral, and Economic Sciences directorate.

Following the presidential budget request, which is not binding, Congress will begin work on a congressional budget resolution, which will provide a blueprint for the remainder of the appropriations process and set levels of discretionary spending. This summer, subcommittees will draft bills according to the spending levels set by the appropriations committees.

As the budget process progresses, APSA urges Congress to reject these cuts in the budget request and support robust federal funding for the humanities and social sciences. APSA members also can play a key role by calling on Congress to oppose these cuts and support humanities and social science funding. The National Humanities Alliance has prepared action alerts for contacting Members of Congress to oppose elimination of funding for the NEH and international programs. Members of Congress also can be reached by phone through the US Capitol switchboard at 202-224-3121.