

PUBLIC POLICY AND ADVOCACY
Legislative Update

Report on Public Interest Policy Ethnic Minority Initiatives of the APA Public Policy Office
(February 2004 – July 2004)

Public Interest Policy staff of APA's Public Policy Office (PPO) are actively engaged in promoting psychology in the public interest in Congress and with the Bush administration. PPO activities include the preparation of legislative background materials, statutory provisions, and formal comments on proposed legislation and regulation, as well as mobilizing the APA membership for grassroots advocacy efforts. PPO staff also identify and invite psychologists to testify at congressional hearings and APA briefings, and to represent the association on federal agency advisory councils and at executive branch meetings. Additionally, PPO's Public Interest Policy staff administer the APA Congressional Fellowship Program, through which five psychologists are currently spending a year on the staff of a member of Congress and/or congressional committee. The office also offers a year-long public policy internship program for psychology graduate students. This document provides a brief overview of PPO initiatives undertaken in support of public interest ethnic minority issues since February of this year, as well as those anticipated through July:

Minority Fellowship Program. In March. PPO staff met with the staff of Representatives Jesse Jackson, Jr. (D-IL) and Patrick Kennedy (D-RI) to urge them to support doubling funding for this program - from \$3 million to \$6 million in FY 2005. This program supports the training of minority mental health professionals and increases the accessibility of culturally competent mental health and substance abuse services for ethnically diverse populations.

Suicide Prevention for American Indians and Alaska Natives (AI/AN). On March 16, PPO staff presented a proposal to the Board of Directors of the National Indian Health Board to create an Office of Suicide Prevention in the Indian Health Service and a suicide prevention center in AI/AN country. Although the Board did not endorse the proposal, they did express support for future collaborations with APA. On June 10, PPO staff requested members of Psychologists in Indian Country, a section of APA's Division 18, Psychologists in Public Service, to send letters to their congressional delegations, urging them to support the suicide prevention proposals. For more detailed information, please visit the PPO Web site at: <http://www.apa.org/ppo/>.