



AMERICAN
PSYCHOLOGICAL
ASSOCIATION

January 26, 2004

Honorable Tom Davis, Chair
Committee on Government Reform
2157 Rayburn House Office Building
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-6143

Dear Chairman Davis:

I am writing to you because S.589, the Homeland Security Federal Workforce Act, has been referred to your Committee and it contains a troubling definition that we believe should be removed as you consider it or a companion bill. The laudable intent of the bill is to stimulate the recruitment and retention of scientists to serve in national security positions through loan repayment and graduate fellowship programs.

Alarming, the bill disenfranchises that scientific enterprise from the outset by excluding social sciences (and therefore social and behavioral scientists) from eligibility in those same programs.

S.589 defines "Science" as follows:

(4) SCIENCE- The term `science' means any of the natural and physical sciences including chemistry, biology, physics, and computer science. Such term does not include any of the social sciences.

The report accompanying the bill (S.108-119) fails to provide any explanation for the exclusion of these scientific disciplines. Letters to the bill's sponsor and co-sponsors in the Senate requesting an explanation have gone unanswered since July. Ironically, the program that appears to have provided the impetus for this legislation, the National Security Education Program, actually gives explicit preference to applicants in certain Fields of Emphasis including the social sciences (anthropology, sociology, psychology).

It is hard to imagine a time in our history when understanding why people think and behave the way they do could be more important to our National Security interests. In an analogous Scholars and Fellows program administered by the Department of Homeland Security, nearly 20% of the awardees in the first round (Fall 2003) were applicants representing the behavioral and social sciences. Further, a psychologist - Dr. Detlof von

Winterfeldt - will co-direct the Homeland Security Center for Risk and Economic Analysis of Terrorism Events, the first University-based DHS Center of Excellence. Finally, during a recent forum of the Homeland Security Advanced Research Projects Agency (HSARPA), Deputy Director Jane Alexander indicated HSARPA likely will issue solicitations on the detection of hostile intent as well as human psychology and information command and control issues.

Recognition of the importance of social science in preserving homeland security reaches well beyond DHS. The Interagency Working Group on Social, Behavioral and Economic Sciences is in the final stages of developing a set of research priorities for the Task Force on Anti-Terrorism Research and Development under the auspices of the National Science and Technology Council. Two years in the making, the report from the Workgroup will highlight a range of research priorities around detection and prevention of terrorist attacks; reducing US vulnerability to such attacks; and minimizing the damage and speeding the recovery of such attacks.

Given the compelling need to include social and behavioral sciences at every level in the recruitment and maintenance of a well-rounded federal homeland security workforce, the definition of Science in S. 589 should be amended. If the term "Science" needs to be defined at all, we would suggest a more fluid approach to allow OPM and the sponsoring agencies greater flexibility. In that context we suggest the following:

(4) Science - The term science means any field of study deemed by OPM and the sponsoring agency to represent an Area of Critical Importance for homeland security applications.

Importantly this definition is aligned with the Purpose as stated in the bill to "provide the necessary resources, accountability, and flexibility to meet the national security educational needs of the United States, especially as such needs change over time."

Please feel free to contact Dr. Geoffrey K. Mumford, Director of Science Policy at (202) 336-6067 should you or your staff require further information on this issue.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'N. Anderson', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Norman B. Anderson, Ph.D.
Chief Executive Officer