

Adoption Opportunities

The Committee recommends \$39,100,000 for the Adoption Opportunities program. This program funds discretionary grants to help facilitate the elimination of barriers to adoption and provide technical assistance to help States increase the number of children adopted, particularly children with special needs.

Adoption Incentives

The Committee recommends \$37,943,000 for the Adoption Incentives program. This program provides formula-based incentive payments to States to encourage them to increase the number of adoptions of children from the foster care system, with an emphasis on children who are the hardest to place.

Social Services and Income Maintenance Research

The Committee recommends \$5,762,000 for Social Services and Income Maintenance Research. These funds support research and evaluation of cost-effective programs that increase the stability and economic independence of families and contribute to the healthy development of children and youth.

Native American Programs

The Committee recommends \$46,520,000 for Native American programs. These funds support a variety of programs to promote self-sufficiency and cultural preservation activities among Native American, Native Hawaiian, Alaska Native, and Pacific Islander organizations and communities.

Within the total, the Committee recommendation includes \$12,000,000 for Native American language preservation activities, including no less than \$4,000,000 for Native American language nests and survival schools, as authorized by sections 803C(b)(7)(A)–(B) of the Native American Programs Act. The Committee directs HHS to give priority to programs with the most rigorous immersion programs. In addition, the Committee directs ACF to coordinate with the Department of Education in administering these funds.

Community Services Block Grant

The Committee recommendation includes \$674,000,000 for the Community Services Block Grant [CSBG]. The CSBG is a formula grant to States and Indian tribes to provide a wide range of services to alleviate causes of poverty in communities and to assist low-income individuals in becoming self-sufficient. States are required to pass on at least 90 percent of these funds to local community-based organizations, the vast majority of which are community action agencies.

Community Economic Development

The Committee recommendation does not include funding for the Community Economic Development [CED] program as proposed by the administration. The President's budget proposed eliminating this program because it is similar or duplicative of programs administered by other agencies, including the Department of Treasury.

Rural Community Facilities

The Committee recommendation does not include funding for the Rural Community Facilities program as proposed by the administration. The President's budget proposed eliminating this program because it is similar or duplicative of programs administered by other agencies, including the Department of Agriculture and Environmental Protection Agency.

Assets for Independence

The Committee recommendation includes \$12,000,000 for the Assets for Independence [AFI] program. The AFI program provides discretionary grants to organizations to support individual development accounts that encourage low-income individuals to create savings accounts for dedicated purposes, such as buying a home, paying for college, or starting a business.

The Committee remains concerned that grantees have been unable to expend all of their funding under this program, which has resulted in a significant amount of funding lapsing. Grantees have 5 years to expend funds but some have struggled to encourage enough savings or to provide a sufficient match to be able to expend their full grant during that time.

National Domestic Violence Hotline

The Committee recommendation includes \$4,500,000 for the National Domestic Violence Hotline. This national, toll-free hotline provides critical emergency assistance and information to victims of domestic violence 24 hours a day.

Family Violence Prevention and Services

The Committee recommendation includes \$135,000,000 for Family Violence Prevention and Services programs. These funds support programs to prevent family violence and provide immediate shelter and related assistance for victims of domestic violence and their dependents.

Chafee Education and Training Vouchers

The Committee recommendation includes \$43,257,000 for the Chafee Education and Training Voucher program. This program supports vouchers to foster care youth to help pay for expenses related to postsecondary education and vocational training.

Disaster Human Services Case Management

The Committee recommends \$1,864,000 for Disaster Human Services Case Management. This program assists States in establishing the capacity to provide case management services in a timely manner in the event of a disaster. It ensures that States are able to meet social service needs during disasters by helping disaster victims prepare recovery plans, referring them to service providers and FEMA contacts to identify needed assistance, and providing ongoing support and monitoring through the recovery process.

Program Administration

The Committee recommendation includes \$197,901,000 for the Federal costs of administering ACF programs.

PROMOTING SAFE AND STABLE FAMILIES

Appropriations, 2015	\$404,765,000
Budget estimate, 2016	434,765,000
Committee recommendation	404,765,000

The Committee recommends \$404,765,000 for the Promoting Safe and Stable Families program. The Committee recommendation includes \$345,000,000 in mandatory funds authorized by the Social Security Act and \$59,765,000 in discretionary appropriations.

This program supports activities that can prevent the emergence of family crises that might require the temporary or permanent removal of a child from his or her home. Grants allow States to operate coordinated programs of family preservation services, time-limited family reunification services, community-based family support services, and adoption promotion and support services.

PAYMENTS FOR FOSTER CARE AND PERMANENCY

Appropriations, 2015	\$4,832,000,000
Budget estimate, 2016	5,298,000,000
Committee recommendation	5,298,000,000

The Committee recommends \$5,298,000,000 in mandatory funds for Payments for Foster Care and Permanency. In addition, the Committee recommends \$2,300,000,000 in advance mandatory funding for the first quarter of fiscal year 2017. These funds support programs that assist States with the costs of maintaining eligible children in foster care, prepare children for living on their own, assist relatives with legal guardianship of eligible children, and find and support adoptive homes for children with special needs.

The Committee continues to strongly support efforts to improve the coordination and availability of child welfare and housing services for children aging out, or who have recently aged out, of the foster care system. Children aging out of foster care face an abrupt transition, and improving the quality of services available to them, and particularly the coordination of child welfare and housing services, can help improve outcomes for these particularly vulnerable youth and reduce total costs to the Government. The Committee strongly encourages HHS to work with the Department of Housing and Urban Development to improve the coordination of child welfare and housing services at the Federal and local level.

ADMINISTRATION FOR COMMUNITY LIVING
AGING AND DISABILITY SERVICES PROGRAMS

Appropriations, 2015	\$1,700,956,000
Budget estimate, 2016	2,123,355,000
Committee recommendation	1,888,139,000

The Committee recommends an appropriation of \$1,888,139,000, for the Administration for Community Living [ACL], which includes \$30,000,000 in Medicare Trust Funds. The Committee recommendation also includes \$27,050,000 to be transferred to ACL from the PPH Fund.

ACL was created with the goal of increasing access to community support for older Americans and people with disabilities. It is charged with administering programs authorized under the Older Americans Act [OAA] and the Developmental Disabilities Act, as well as promoting community living policies throughout the Federal Government for older Americans and people with disabilities.

Home- and Community-Based Supportive Services

The Committee recommends an appropriation of \$347,724,000 for the Home- and Community-Based Supportive Services program. This program provides formula grants to States and territories to fund a wide range of social services that enable seniors to remain independent and in their homes for as long as possible. State agencies on aging award funds to designated area agencies on aging that, in turn, make awards to local service providers. This activity supports services such as transportation, adult day care, physical fitness programs, and in-home assistance such as personal care and homemaker assistance. The Committee directs ACL to work with States to prioritize innovative service models, like naturally occurring retirement communities [NORCs], which help older Americans remain independent as they age. The Committee notes that NORCs, and similar settings, are a more cost-effective alternative to long-term care that enables older Americans to be more engaged in their communities while living at home.

Preventive Health Services

The Committee recommends \$19,848,000 for Preventive Health Services. This program funds activities such as medication management and enhanced fitness and wellness programs. These programs help seniors stay healthy and avoid chronic disease, thus reducing the need for costly medical interventions. The Committee maintains bill language that requires States to use these funds to support evidence-based models that enhance the wellness of seniors.

Protection of Vulnerable Older Americans

The Committee recommends \$20,658,000 for grants to States for the Long-term Care Ombudsman program and the Prevention of Elder Abuse program. Both programs provide formula grants to States to prevent the abuse, neglect, and exploitation of older individuals. The ombudsman program focuses on the needs of residents of nursing homes and other long-term care facilities, while the elder abuse prevention program targets the elderly community at large.

National Family Caregiver Support Program

The Committee recommends \$145,586,000 for the National Family Caregiver Support program. Funds appropriated for this activity establish a multifaceted support system in each State for family caregivers, allowing them to care for their loved ones at home for as long as possible. States may use funding to provide information to caregivers about available services, assistance to caregivers in gaining access to services, caregiver counseling and training, respite care to enable caregivers to be temporarily relieved from their caregiving responsibilities, and limited supplemental services that fill remaining service gaps.

Native American Caregiver Support Program

The Committee recommendation includes \$6,031,000 to carry out the Native American Caregiver Support program. This program provides grants to tribes for the support of American Indian, Alaskan Native, and Native Hawaiian families caring for older relatives with chronic illness or disability, as well as for grandparents caring for grandchildren.

Congregate and Home-Delivered Nutrition Services

The Committee recommends an appropriation of \$438,191,000 for congregate nutrition services and \$216,397,000 for home-delivered meals. These programs address the nutritional needs of older individuals, thus helping them to stay healthy and reduce their risk of disability. Funded projects must make home-delivered and congregate meals available at least once a day, 5 days a week, and each meal must meet a minimum of one-third of daily dietary requirements. While States receive separate allotments of funds for congregate meals, home-delivered meals, and supportive services, they have flexibility to transfer funds between these programs.

Healthier Foods.—The Committee encourages ACL to partner with organizations to review, identify, and disseminate best practices to provide healthier foods and menu options for seniors. These practices could include better food product procurement, preparation techniques, and improved menu planning and recipe documentation to facilitate changes that support healthier meals. Coalitions of manufacturers, food service providers, and food service distributors could also be developed to explore ways to promote best practices and provide a more appropriate selection of healthier ready-to-use ingredients.

Nutrition Services Incentives Program.—The Committee recommendation includes \$160,069,000 for the Nutrition Services Incentives Program [NSIP]. NSIP augments funding for congregate and home-delivered meals provided to older adults. States and tribes may choose to receive all or part of their funding in the form of commodities from the USDA.

Aging Grants to Indian Tribes and Native Hawaiian Organizations

The Committee recommends \$24,850,000 for grants to Native Americans. This program provides grants to eligible tribal organizations for the delivery of nutrition and supportive services to Native Americans.

Tribal Advisory Council.—The Committee encourages ACL to continue with their plans to establish a Tribal Advisory Council focusing on issues that affect the aging Indian population. ACL shall continue to participate in the broader Secretary-level Tribal Advisory Council to present their latest efforts, provide advice with respect to policies and services that affect the older Indian population, help in identifying priorities, and coordinating strategies across the Tribal, regional, or national levels.

Aging Network Support Activities

The Committee recommends \$7,088,000 for Aging Network Support activities. These funds support activities that expand public understanding of aging and the aging process, apply social research and analysis to improve access to and delivery of services for older individuals, test innovative ideas and programs, and provide technical assistance to agencies that administer programs authorized by the OAA.

Alzheimer's Disease Demonstration Grants to States

The Committee recommendation includes \$3,800,000 for Alzheimer's Disease Demonstration Grants to States. This program funds competitive grants to States to test and implement new models of care for individuals with Alzheimer's disease.

Alzheimer's Disease Initiative

The Committee recommends \$14,700,000 in mandatory funding be transferred from the PPH Fund to ACL for the Alzheimer's Disease Initiative. Of the total, \$10,500,000 is provided to expand the availability of home- and community-based dementia services and supports. The remaining \$4,200,000 is provided for a public awareness outreach campaign regarding Alzheimer's disease.

Lifespan Respite Care

The Committee recommends \$2,242,000 for the Lifespan Respite Care program. The Lifespan Respite Care program provides grants to States to expand respite care services to family caregivers, improve the local coordination of respite care resources, and improve access to and quality of respite care services, thereby reducing family caregiver strain.

Chronic Disease Self-Management Program

The Committee recommends \$7,600,000 be transferred from the PPH Fund to ACL for the Chronic Disease Self-Management Program [CDSMP]. This program assists those with chronic disease manage their conditions and improve their health status. Topics covered by the program include nutrition; appropriate use of medications; fitness; and effective communications with healthcare providers. CDSMP has been shown through multiple studies to result in significant and measurable improvements in health and quality of life, as well as reductions in hospitalizations and emergency room visits.

Elder Falls Prevention

The Committee recommends that \$4,750,000 be transferred from the PPH Fund for Elder Falls Prevention activities at ACL. Preventing falls will help seniors stay independent and in their homes and avoid costly hospitalizations and hip fractures, which frequently lead to nursing home placement. The Committee intends that these funds should be used in coordination with CDC for public education about the risk of these falls, as well as implementation and dissemination of community-based strategies that have been proven to reduce the incidence of falls among seniors.

Senior Medicare Patrol

Due to budget constraints, the Committee recommendation does not include funding for the Senior Medicare Patrol program. The Committee recommendation utilizes the budget cap adjustment for HCFAC and supports this program and other activities to combat fraud and abuse in the Medicare program through that funding mechanism.

Elder Rights Support Activities

The Committee recommends \$7,874,000 for Elder Rights Support activities. These activities support programs that provide information, training, and technical assistance to legal and aging services organizations in order to prevent and detect elder abuse and neglect. The Committee includes the same level as in fiscal year 2015 for the Elder Justice Initiative.

Aging and Disability Resource Centers

The Committee recommendation includes \$5,813,000 for Aging and Disability Resource Centers [ADRCs]. These centers provide information, one-on-one counseling, and access for individuals to learn about their long-term services and support options with the goal of allowing seniors and individuals with disabilities to maintain their independence. The Committee urges ACL to improve coordination among ADRCs, area agencies on aging, and centers for independent living to ensure that there is "no wrong door" to access services.

State Health Insurance Assistance Program

The Committee recommendation includes \$30,000,000 for State Health Insurance Assistance Programs, which provide accurate and understandable health insurance information to Medicare beneficiaries and their families.

Paralysis Resource Center

The Committee recommendation includes \$6,365,000 for the Paralysis Resource Center, which provides comprehensive information and referral services to people living with paralysis and their families. These resources and services focus on the promotion of independence and quality of life for the over 6,000,000 Americans living with paralysis.

Limb Loss

The Committee provides \$2,660,000 for the Limb Loss program, which supports programs and activities to improve the health of people with limb loss and promote their well-being, quality of life, prevent disease, and provide support to their families and caregivers.

Developmental Disabilities State Councils

The Committee recommendation includes \$68,107,000 for State councils on developmental disabilities. These councils work to develop, improve, and expand the system of services and supports for people with developmental disabilities at the State and local level. Councils engage in activities such as training, educating the public, building capacity, and advocating for change in State policies with the goal of furthering the inclusion and integration of individuals with developmental disabilities in all aspects of community life.

Developmental Disabilities Protection and Advocacy

The Committee recommendation includes \$36,797,000 for protection and advocacy programs for people with developmental disabilities. This formula grant program provides funds to States to establish and maintain protection and advocacy systems that protect the legal and human rights of persons with developmental disabilities who are receiving treatment, services, or rehabilitation.

Voting Access for Individuals with Disabilities

The Committee recommendation includes \$4,715,000 to improve voting access for individuals with disabilities. This program provides grants to protection and advocacy organizations to ensure that individuals with disabilities have the opportunity to participate in every step of the electoral process, including registering to vote, accessing polling places, and casting a vote.

Developmental Disabilities Projects of National Significance

The Committee recommendation includes \$8,414,000 for projects of national significance to assist persons with developmental disabilities. This program funds grants and contracts that develop new technologies and demonstrate innovative methods to support the independence, productivity, and integration into the community of persons with developmental disabilities.

Technical Assistance.—The Committee provides \$575,000 for technical assistance and training for the State Councils on Developmental Disabilities.

Transportation.—The Committee includes \$1,000,000 to fund transportation assistance activities for older adults and persons with disabilities. These activities should focus on the most cost-effective and sustainable strategies that can be replicated to other communities.

University Centers for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities

The Committee recommendation includes \$35,790,000 for University Centers for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities [UCEDDs]. The UCEDD program supports a network of 67 centers that are interdisciplinary education, research, and public service

units of a university system or public or nonprofit entities associated with universities. These Centers assist States initiate collaborative research, education, training, and service efforts to assist youth with disabilities to successfully transition from school to postsecondary education, and/or integrated employment. The funding will also allow the Centers to continue to address critical and emerging national needs, such as addressing the needs of the rising numbers of individuals on the autism spectrum; demonstrating cost effective long term services and supports for adults with disabilities and those aging with disabilities; supporting returning veterans; and providing technical assistance to strengthen and support the national network of Centers and to disseminate research and best practices nationwide. Within the amount appropriated for UCEDD, the Committee provides no less than the fiscal year 2015 level for technical assistance for the UCEDD network.

Independent Living

The Committee recommendation includes \$96,124,000 for the Independent Living Program. This program helps ensure that individuals with disabilities can live a productive and independent life in society. Funding supports States sustain, improve, and expand independent living services and establish and support a network of centers for independent living. The Committee includes new bill language providing the necessary authorities for this program as part of the transfer that occurred in fiscal year 2015.

National Institute on Disability, Independent Living, and Rehabilitation Research

The Committee recommendation includes \$98,772,000 for the National Institute on Disability, Independent Living, and Rehabilitation Research [NIDILRR]. The NIDILRR supports research and activities that help to maximize the full potential of individuals with disabilities in employment, independent living, and social activities. The Committee includes new bill language providing the necessary authorities for this program as part of the transfer that occurred in fiscal year 2015.

Assistive Technology

The Committee recommendation includes \$31,350,000 for Assistive Technology [AT]. AT provides States with funding to support individuals with disabilities of all ages to obtain devices and services that will increase, maintain, or improve their functional capabilities. The Committee includes new bill language providing the necessary authorities for this program as part of the transfer that occurred in fiscal year 2015.

Program Administration

The Committee recommends \$35,824,000 for program administration at ACL. These funds support salaries and related expenses for program management and oversight activities.

Business Acumen Learning Collaborative.—The Committee supports ACL in the development of the Business Acumen Learning Collaborative and the successful partnerships between its network of home and community-based services organizations. The collabo-

rative aims to reduce hospital admissions and readmissions, improve care coordination, improve access to social services and supports, and lower overall healthcare expenditures in the future. The Committee urges ACL to continue these efforts and collaborate with CMS to maximize further cost savings.

Muscular Dystrophy.—Since ACL was recently added to the Muscular Dystrophy Coordinating Committee, the Committee requests an update in the fiscal year 2017 CJ on all programs relevant to the Duchenne population, particularly those focused on supporting transitions of persons with Duchenne into adulthood. This report shall include the cost-effectiveness of independent living programs and supports for persons living with various forms of muscular dystrophy.

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

GENERAL DEPARTMENTAL MANAGEMENT

Appropriations, 2015	\$512,862,000
Budget estimate, 2016	558,594,000
Committee recommendation	348,262,000

The Committee recommends \$348,262,000 for General Departmental Management [GDM]. The recommendation includes \$46,762,000 in transfers available under section 241 of the PHS Act.

This appropriation supports activities that are associated with the Secretary's role as policy officer and general manager of the Department. It supports health activities performed by the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Health [ASH], including the Office of the Surgeon General. GDM funds also support the Department's centralized services carried out by several Office of the Secretary staff divisions, including personnel management, administrative and management services, information resources management, intergovernmental relations, legal services, planning and evaluation, finance and accounting, and external affairs.

Breast Cancer Patient Education Campaign.— Since 1998, health plans that offer breast cancer coverage have been required to provide for breast reconstruction and prostheses. Published studies report that an overwhelming majority of women eligible for breast reconstruction following breast cancer are not informed of their care options. This is especially problematic for members of racial and ethnic minority groups, who are even less likely to be informed but have a greater chance of getting breast cancer. According to the American Society of Plastic Surgeons, only 33 percent of eligible women with breast cancer undergo breast reconstruction and published research reports that nearly 70 percent of women are not informed of their care options by their general surgeon. The Committee directs the Secretary to plan and implement an education campaign to inform breast cancer patients anticipating surgery about the availability and coverage of breast reconstruction, prostheses, and other options, with a focus on informing patients who are members of racial and ethnic minority groups. The campaign shall include dissemination of the following information: (A) Breast reconstruction is possible at the time of breast cancer surgery, or at a later time. (B) Prostheses or breast forms may be available. (C) Federal law mandates both public and private health plans to include coverage of breast reconstruction and prostheses. (D) The patient has a right to choose a provider of reconstructive care, including the potential transfer of care to a surgeon that provides breast reconstructive care. (E) The patient may opt to undergo breast reconstruction sometime after the time of breast cancer surgery for personal or medical reasons, during treatment or after completion of all other breast cancer treatments. (F) Other information as the Secretary determines appropriate. The information required to be disseminated shall be posted on the Web sites of relevant Federal agencies, including the Office of Women's Health, the Office of Minority Health, and the Office of Rural Health Policy. The campaign shall not specify, or be designed to serve as a tool to limit, the healthcare providers available to patients. In de-

veloping the information to be disseminated, the Secretary shall consult with appropriate medical societies and patient advocates related to breast cancer, breast reconstructive surgery, breast prostheses, and breast forms and with patient advocates representing racial and ethnic minority groups with a special emphasis on African-American and Hispanic populations. The Committee directs the Secretary to provide an annual update in the CJ describing the activities carried out under this section during the preceding fiscal year, and an evaluation of the extent to which such activities have been effective in improving the health and well-being of racial and ethnic minority groups.

Breast Density.—The Committee encourages the Secretary to continue the activities of the Department conducting or supporting applied research on breast density; research on the cost-effectiveness and feasibility of reimbursement models for supplemental imaging relating to breast density; and research in support of clinical guidelines and best practices concerning use of mammograms and supplemental screening for women with dense breast tissue.

Center for Faith-Based and Neighborhood Partnerships.—The Committee recognizes the realignment of the Center for Faith-Based and Neighborhood Partnerships from ACF to the Secretary's Office of Intergovernmental and External Affairs. To complete this realignment, the Committee transfers the Center for Faith-Based and Neighborhood Partnerships' budget of \$1,299,000 from ACF to the GDM account as requested in the administration's budget.

Cerebral Cavernous Angioma.—The Committee encourages the Secretary to coordinate efforts by agencies and patient advocacy organizations to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of the research and clinical drug trials effort.

Children in Poverty.—The Committee encourages the U.S. Surgeon General to issue a report within 180 days after enactment of this act to the Committees on Appropriations of the House of Representatives and the Senate on improving the health of America's children. Too many children still live in poverty, compromising their ability to be healthy, to succeed in school and to raise healthy families themselves. This report can increase awareness and generate additional efforts on ameliorating this public health problem.

Conference Attendance.—The Committee remains concerned that Congress and the administration have implemented unnecessary barriers to scientific research and collaboration through various requirements on administrative tasks, particularly the approval process for conference travel. The NIH reports that they spend approximately \$14,000,000 annually to comply with this provision and CDC dedicates approximately 1,000 FTE staff hours and 375 contractor support hours per week for travel approval and oversight. The Department is directed to provide the Committees on Appropriations of the House of Representatives and the Senate recommendations to help streamline administrative commitments, particularly relating to travel, within 90 days of enactment of this act.

Dietary Guidelines.—The Committee is concerned that the advisory committee for the 2015 Dietary Guidelines for Americans considered issues outside of the nutritional focus of the panel. The advisory committee included agriculture production practices and en-

vironmental factors into their criteria for establishing the next dietary recommendations. The Committee directs the Secretary to ensure that the advisory committee focuses on nutrient and dietary recommendations based upon only a preponderance of nutritional and dietary scientific evidence. Furthermore, the Committee includes new bill language directing the Secretary to only include nutrition and dietary information, not extraneous factors, in the final 2015 Dietary Guidelines for Americans.

E-Health and Telemedicine.—The Committee urges the Department to increase collaboration and coordination across relevant Federal agencies on E-health and telemedicine to assess current efforts, needs, barriers, standards, goals, eliminate duplication and incompatibility, and ultimately improve health quality, effectiveness, and outcomes. The Department shall provide a report within 180 days after enactment of this act to the Committees on Appropriations of the House of Representatives and the Senate with its analysis, including any recommendations on improving the existing E-health and telemedicine efforts.

IT Efficiency.—The Committee encourages the Department to perform periodic inventories of software licenses in use across HHS. HHS should compare those usage numbers to its purchased licenses and seek to increase cost savings and efficiencies by using this information to obtain HHS-wide acquisitions as opposed to component-specific purchases of licenses.

National Strategy for Combating Antibiotic Resistant Bacteria [CARB].—The Committee supports the CARB initiative that will strengthen efforts to prevent, detect, and control illness and deaths related to infections caused by antibiotic resistant bacteria. The Committee directs the Department to work with DOD, USDA, VA, and FDA to broaden and expand efforts to track and store both antibiotic resistant bacteria genes and the mobile genetic elements from antibiotic resistant bacteria along with metadata. This should include such data as geographic information system coordinates describing where the bacteria were isolated to monitor emerging antibiotic resistant bacteria, assess their threat to public health, and develop mitigation strategies. The Department shall include in the fiscal year 2017 CJ a detailed update on the progress being made to implement the CARB national strategy initiative.

Necrotizing Enterocolitis [NEC].—The Committee directs the Secretary to coordinate the Department's efforts on NEC, including disseminating best practices and successful interventions for the prevention of NEC, particularly in premature infants.

Open Access to Federal Research.—The Committee continues to support the Office of Science and Technology Policy's [OSTP] development and implementation of policies to increase public access to federally funded scientific research. The Committee is pleased by the progress being made for Departments and Agencies funded under this bill, and supports OSTP's requirement for Agencies to have their public access and data management plan requirements in place for grants, contracts, and intramural research projects by January 1, 2016. Agencies funded in this bill are instructed to continue with their quarterly reporting requirements to the Senate Committee on Appropriations to keep Congress apprised of the re-

maining progress that needs to be made in making federally funded research accessible to the public as expeditiously as possible.

Prenatal Opioid Abuse and Neonatal Abstinence Syndrome.—The Committee directs the Secretary to lead a review of planning and coordination within the Department related to prenatal opioid use and neonatal abstinence syndrome. In carrying out the review of the planning and coordination efforts, the Secretary shall develop a strategy to address research and program gaps, including such gaps identified in findings made by reports of the Government Accountability Office. Such strategy shall address: (1) gaps in research, including with respect to the most appropriate treatment of pregnant women with opioid use disorders; the most appropriate treatment and management of infants with neonatal abstinence syndrome; and the long-term effects of prenatal opioid exposure on children; and (2) gaps in programs, including—the availability of treatment programs for pregnant and postpartum women and for newborns with neonatal abstinence syndrome; and guidance and coordination in Federal efforts to address prenatal opioid use or neonatal abstinence syndrome. No later than 1 year after the date of enactment of this act, the Secretary shall submit a report to the Committees on Appropriations of the House of Representatives and the Senate on the findings of the review of planning and coordination efforts at the Department and the strategy developed to address any research and program gaps. Furthermore, the Committee directs the Secretary to conduct a study and develop recommendations for preventing and treating prenatal opioid abuse and neonatal abstinence syndrome, soliciting input from nongovernmental entities, including organizations representing patients, healthcare providers, hospitals, other treatment facilities, and other entities, as appropriate. The Secretary shall publish on the appropriate Web sites a report on the study and recommendations no later than 1 year after the date of enactment of this act. The study and report shall include: (1) a comprehensive assessment of existing research with respect to the prevention, identification, treatment, and long-term outcomes of neonatal abstinence syndrome, including the identification and treatment of pregnant women or women who may become pregnant who use opioids or other drugs; (2) an evaluation of: (A) the causes of and risk factors for opioid use disorders among women of reproductive age, including pregnant women; (B) the barriers to identifying and treating opioid use disorders among women of reproductive age, including pregnant and postpartum women and women with young children; (C) current practices in the healthcare system to respond to and treat pregnant women with opioid use disorders and infants born with neonatal abstinence syndrome; (D) medically indicated use of opioids during pregnancy; (E) access to treatment for opioid use disorders in pregnant and postpartum women; and (F) access to treatment for infants with neonatal abstinence syndrome; and (3) recommendations on: (A) preventing, identifying, and treating neonatal abstinence syndrome in infants; (B) treating pregnant women who are dependent on opioids; and (C) preventing opioid dependence among women of reproductive age, including pregnant women, who may be at risk of developing opioid dependence.

Prescription Drugs on Infants.—Little is known about the effects of most drugs on the mother and her child or the ways in which pregnancy and lactation alter the metabolism and effect of medication. The Committee encourages the Department to coordinate all activities in this area and requests an update in the fiscal year 2017 CJ on the progress made on the safety and efficacy of drugs in this population, as well as potential projects related to data gathering and other relevant initiatives underway related to this issue.

Reducing Health Disparities.—The Committee encourages the Secretary to coordinate the capabilities of HHS agencies and partner with NIH to improve recruitment and training of health professionals and biomedical researchers to meet the needs of minority and underserved populations and to reduce health disparities in local communities.

Seafood Sustainability.—The Committee prohibits the Department from using or recommending third party, nongovernmental certification for seafood sustainability.

Severe Wounds.—The Committee directs the Secretary, in consultation with relevant stakeholders, to conduct a study on the treatment needs of individuals entitled to benefits under part A, or enrolled under part B, of Medicare, requiring specialized wound care, and the cost, for such individuals and the Medicare program, of treating severe wounds in rural and urban areas. The study shall include an assessment of: (A) access of such individuals to appropriate levels of care for such cases; (B) the potential impact that section 1886(m)(6)(A)(i) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1395ww(m)(6)(A)(i)) will have on the access, quality, and cost of care for such individuals; and (C) how to appropriately pay for such care under the Medicare program. The Secretary shall submit the report within 1 year after enactment of this act to the Committees on Appropriations of the House of Representatives and the Senate with recommendations for such legislation and administrative actions as the Secretary determines appropriate.

Sickle Cell Disease [SCD].—The Committee recognizes the Department's efforts in addressing the burden of SCD and continues to support a multi-disciplinary approach to identify new methods to disease management, supportive care, and reducing the burden of care and premature death. The Committee urges the Secretary to continue coordinating the Department's activities through the Interagency Working Group on SCD.

Technical Assistance for Priority Areas.—The Committee notes that the Medicare Access and CHIP Reauthorization Act of 2015 authorizes the Secretary to provide technical assistance on the Merit-based Incentive Payment System to eligible professionals with a priority given to practices located in rural, medically underserved, or health professional shortage areas. Due to their extensive experience working with providers in rural and underserved areas, the Committee highlights the significance of the State Offices of Rural Health and their ability to provide this type of guidance.

Transparency in Health Plans.—The Committee is aware of the additional guidance issued to qualified health plans to ensure greater consistency and full transparency of coverage options in-

cluded in health insurance plans prior to selecting them on the Exchanges during the enrollment process. The Committee expects the Secretary to ensure this guidance is followed.

United States-Mexico Border Health Commission.—The border between the United States and Mexico is one of the busiest transit points in the world. Therefore, the Committee urges the Secretary to continue supporting the United States-Mexico Border Health Commission and to focus on infection disease surveillance, epidemiology, and preparedness activities along the borders in order to be able to respond to potential outbreaks and epidemics, including those caused by potential bioterrorism agents.

Viral Hepatitis Action Plan.—The Committee continues to be concerned by the viral hepatitis epidemic and recognizes that much needs to be done to identify the millions of Americans with hepatitis before they reach end stage liver disease. The Committee urges the Secretary to continue to implement the Viral Hepatitis Action Plan and requests a report on spending by HHS agencies to implement the Action Plan in the fiscal year 2017 CJ. The report should include descriptions of public private partnerships that will enhance Federal efforts to combat viral hepatitis.

Teen Pregnancy Prevention

The Committee recommendation includes \$20,000,000 for the Teen Pregnancy Prevention program. This program supports competitive grants to public and private entities to replicate evidence-based teen pregnancy prevention approaches.

Office of Minority Health

The Committee recommends \$36,000,000 for the Office of Minority Health [OMH]. This Office focuses on strategies designed to decrease health disparities and to improve the health status of racial and ethnic minority populations in the United States. OMH establishes goals and coordinates all departmental activity related to improving health outcomes for disadvantaged and minority individuals.

The Lupus Initiative.—The Committee continues to provide \$2,000,000 for Lupus activities at the OMH. The Committee commends the successes of the National Health Education program on Lupus for healthcare providers that started in fiscal year 2009. Within the funding provided for Lupus activities, the Committee includes \$1,000,000 to complete the implementation of the health education program in fiscal year 2016 to transition to another priority in the Lupus community. The Committee recognizes that clinical trial education and successful recruitment of minorities into trials is a significant challenge in the drug development for Lupus. Therefore, the Committee directs OMH to initiate a program to develop a clinical trial education action plan for Lupus and begin preliminary steps towards implementation of the action plan. OMH shall work with the relevant Lupus stakeholders in this effort. The Committee includes the remaining \$1,000,000 for this new initiative, and it should focus on developing public-private and community partnerships, evaluate current minority clinical trial education and participation programs, and development of a research plan for creating new clinical trial education models in lupus. OMH shall

update the Committee on the progress of this new initiative in the fiscal year 2017 CJ.

Abstinence Education

The Committee recommends \$20,000,000 for abstinence education. This is a competitive grant program that funds evidenced based abstinence models for adolescents.

Office of Women’s Health

The Committee recommends \$29,500,000 for the Office of Women’s Health [OWH]. This office develops, stimulates, and coordinates women’s health research, healthcare services, and public and healthcare professional education across the Department. It advances important crosscutting initiatives and develops public-private partnerships, providing leadership and policy direction to address the disparities in women’s health.

The Committee recommendation includes \$3,100,000 to combat the violence against women through the State partnership initiative. This program provides funding to State-level public and private health programs to partner with domestic and sexual violence organizations to improve healthcare providers’ ability to help victims of violence and improve prevention programs.

HIV/AIDS in Minority Communities

Due to budget constraints, the Committee recommendation does not include funding for this program. The Secretary’s Minority AIDS Fund [SMAIF] supplements core HIV/AIDS funding provided to other HHS agencies. The majority of SMAIF activities supported prevention, treatment, outreach, and education activities focused on minority populations. The Committee notes that core HIV/AIDS activities such as CDC’s HIV Prevention with Health Department program and HRSA’s Ryan White programs provide the same services to the same population. In addition, SAMHSA also provides similar services but targeted to individuals with co-occurring mental health or substance abuse disorders.

Embryo Donation and Adoption

The Committee recommends \$1,000,000 for Embryo Donation and Adoption.

OFFICE OF MEDICARE HEARINGS AND APPEALS

Appropriations, 2015	\$87,381,000
Budget estimate, 2016	140,000,000
Committee recommendation	97,381,000

The Committee provides \$97,381,000 for the Office of Medicare Hearings and Appeals [OMHA]. This Office is responsible for hearing Medicare appeals at the administrative law judge level, which is the third level of Medicare claims appeals. OMHA ensures that Medicare beneficiaries who are dissatisfied with the initial decisions about their benefits or eligibility can appeal and exercise their right to a hearing in front of an administrative law judge.

Appeals Backlog.—The Committee continues to be concerned over the substantial backlog in the number of cases pending before the administrative law judges at OMHA. The Committee directs

OMHA to use the additional funds provided to address the current backlog and requests a spend plan within 30 days after enactment of this act. OMHA shall also provide an update in the fiscal year 2017 CJ on the pilot programs implemented in 2014, including the global settlement offer, statistical sampling, and mediation strategies.

OFFICE OF THE NATIONAL COORDINATOR FOR HEALTH INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

Appropriations, 2015	\$60,367,000
Budget estimate, 2016	91,800,000
Committee recommendation	60,367,000

The Committee makes available \$60,367,000 to the Office of the National Coordinator for Health Information Technology [ONC]. The Committee provides funding for ONC entirely through budget authority, rather than through both budget authority and transfers available under section 241 of the PHS Act. ONC is responsible for promoting the use of electronic health records in clinical practice, coordinating Federal health information systems, and collaborating with the private sector to develop standards for a nationwide interoperable health information technology infrastructure.

Precision Medicine.—The Committee recommendation includes \$5,000,000 for the coordination and development of data standards necessary to advance the Precision Medicine initiative. ONC will engage appropriate stakeholders to identify the standards and policy required to protect user privacy.

OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL

Appropriations, 2015	\$71,000,000
Budget estimate, 2016	83,000,000
Committee recommendation	71,000,000

The Committee recommends an appropriation of \$71,000,000 for the HHS Office of Inspector General [OIG]. In addition to discretionary funds provided in this act, the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 provides a permanent appropriation of \$333,893,000 for OIG.

OIG conducts audits, investigations, and evaluations of the programs administered by the Department's operating and staff divisions, including the recipients of the Department's grant and contract funds. In doing so, OIG addresses issues of waste, fraud, and abuse and makes recommendations to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the Department's programs and operations.

OFFICE FOR CIVIL RIGHTS

Appropriations, 2015	\$38,798,000
Budget estimate, 2016	42,705,000
Committee recommendation	38,798,000

The Committee recommends \$38,798,000 for the Office for Civil Rights [OCR], which is responsible for enforcing civil rights-related statutes in healthcare and human services programs. To enforce these statutes, OCR investigates complaints of discrimination, conducts program reviews to correct discriminatory practices, and im-

plements programs to generate voluntary compliance among providers and constituency groups of health and human services.

Pending Complaints.—OCR is tasked with ensuring that individuals are not subject to unlawful discrimination in healthcare programs. However, since September 2014, three Weldon Amendment cases have been filed with OCR without resolution. The OCR process is the only recourse for plaintiffs in these cases. Therefore, the Committee directs OCR to properly investigate the pending cases and urges OCR to resolve the pending cases expeditiously.

RETIREMENT PAY AND MEDICAL BENEFITS FOR COMMISSIONED OFFICERS

Appropriations, 2015	\$562,241,000
Budget estimate, 2016	586,188,000
Committee recommendation	586,188,000

The Committee provides an estimated \$586,188,000 in mandatory funds for Retirement Pay and Medical Benefits for Commissioned Officers of the U.S. Public Health Service [PHS]. This account provides for retirement payments to PHS officers who are retired due to age, disability, or length of service; payments to survivors of deceased officers; and medical care to Active Duty and retired officers, as well as their dependents.

PUBLIC HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES EMERGENCY FUND

Appropriations, 2015	\$1,175,069,000
Budget estimate, 2016	1,909,981,000
Committee recommendation	1,227,277,000

The Committee recommends \$1,227,277,000 for the Public Health and Social Services Emergency Fund. This appropriation supports the activities of the Assistant Secretary for Preparedness and Response [ASPR] and other components within the Office of the Secretary to prepare for the health consequences of bioterrorism and other public health emergencies, including pandemic influenza. It also provides funding for the Department's cybersecurity efforts.

Office of the Assistant Secretary for Preparedness and Response

The Committee recommendation includes \$1,102,928,000 for activities administered by the Assistant Secretary for Preparedness and Response [ASPR]. This Office was created by the Pandemic and All-Hazards Preparedness Act [PAHPA] to lead the Department's activities regarding preventing, preparing for, and responding to public health emergencies, including disasters and acts of terrorism.

National Disaster Medical System.—The Committee includes new bill language providing coverage under the Federal Employees Compensation Act for National Disaster Medical System intermittent employees who are activated for training or deployment.

Hospital Preparedness Program

The Committee's recommendation includes \$254,555,000 for the Hospital Preparedness Program [HPP]. This program provides grants to States to build healthcare coalitions that enhance regional and local hospital preparedness and improve overall surge capacity in public health emergencies. The Committee believes this

funding should continue to provide our Nation's hospitals and emergency responders the necessary tools to respond quickly and collaboratively to these and other public health emergencies that are inevitable in our Nation's communities.

Allocation of Funds.—The Committee urges ASPR and State grantees to be strategic about allocation of HPP funds. Under current structures, States may allocate funds to as many healthcare coalitions as they deem appropriate. ASPR is encouraged to communicate to grantees the minimum standards a healthcare coalition must meet to be qualified under the program. ASPR should also provide oversight and technical assistance to ensure coalitions are meeting those standards and States are subgranting funds appropriately.

Geographic Variation in Mass Casualty Traumatic Injury Treatment Capacity.—The Committee is aware that the present geographic distribution of trauma and burn centers and other similar response capabilities are heavily skewed toward urban locations and vary significantly among different urban settings. The Committee is concerned that there are vulnerabilities in the Nation's emergency response system for areas not equipped to deal with mass casualty incidents with traumatic injuries. According to the CDC, 45 million Americans lack access to Level I trauma centers within the so-called "golden hour" during which outcomes dramatically improve. Similarly, just 25 percent of the U.S. population lives within 1 hour by ground transport of a verified burn center. Therefore, the Committee directs ASPR to provide a detailed report that analyzes the ability of our current infrastructure to respond to a large scale (greater than 20 casualties) traumatic injury event that may occur in a rural, exurban, suburban, and urban locations that are relatively underserved by the Nation's trauma system. The report should include recommendations on capacity building approaches including the use of the HPP address these capacity shortfalls.

Local Health Departments.—The Committee requests more detailed information in the fiscal year 2017 CJ on how State HPP funding is distributed at the local level. ASPR is encouraged to require States to report how much Federal HPP funding is being allocated to local health departments and what basis or formula each State is using to make such allocations.

Rural Areas.—The Committee encourages ASPR to ensure that hospital systems in remote and rural areas are benefiting from this program and are prepared in cases of emergencies, epidemics, or natural disasters.

Emergency System for Advance Registration of Volunteer Health Professionals [ESAR VHP]

The Committee recommendation does not include funding for the ESAR VHP program, consistent with the administration's request. Past funding supported technical assistance to States, but any future request for support will be covered by other ASPR resources. This program established a national network of health professionals who provide assistance during an emergency.

Biomedical Advanced Research and Development

The Committee recommendation includes \$473,000,000 for advanced research and development. The Committee recommendation includes \$143,000,000 for BARDA's Broad Spectrum Antimicrobials program as part of the Department-wide CARB initiative. The Committee directs BARDA to collaborate with NIH, CDC, AHRQ, FDA, VA, DOD, and USDA to leverage existing resources to increase capacities for research aimed at developing therapeutic treatments. The Committee appreciates the work of BARDA to combat antibiotic resistant bacteria through expansion of public-private partnerships that invest in the development of new antibiotic therapies. The Committee expects BARDA to continue to use its other transactional authority, as granted by PAHPA, to the maximum extent possible to further its work in this area.

Medical Countermeasure Dispensing

The Committee recommendation does not include funding for the Medical Countermeasure Dispensing program, consistent with the administration's request. The Committee notes that prior year balances exist to support any remaining program costs in fiscal year 2016.

Project BioShield Special Reserve Fund

The Committee recommendation includes \$255,000,000 for the Project BioShield Special Reserve Fund. The Committee is committed to ensuring the Nation is adequately prepared against chemical, biological, radiological, and nuclear attacks. The Committee recognizes a public-private partnership to develop medical countermeasures [MCMs] is required to successfully prepare and defend the Nation against these threats. Where there is little or no commercial market, the Committee supports the goal of Government financing providing a market guarantee.

Other Activities

The Committee recommendation includes the following amounts for the following activities within ASPR:

- Operations.—\$30,938,000;
- Preparedness and Emergency Operations.—\$24,654,000;
- National Disaster Medical System.—\$49,904,000; and
- Policy and Planning.—\$14,877,000.

Office of the Assistant Secretary for Administration

The Committee recommends \$41,125,000 for information technology cybersecurity in the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Administration. These funds provide for continuous monitoring and security incident response coordination for the Department's computer systems and networks.

Office of the Assistant Secretary for Health/Medical Reserve Corps

The Committee recommendation includes \$3,839,000 for the Medical Reserve Corps program in ASH. This program is a national network of local volunteers who work to strengthen the public health infrastructure and preparedness capabilities of their communities.

Office of the Secretary

The Committee recommendation includes \$79,385,000 for activities within the Office of the Secretary.

Pandemic Influenza Preparedness

The Committee recommendation includes \$71,915,000 for Pandemic Influenza Preparedness. Of the total, \$32,009,000 is provided in annual funding and \$39,906,000 in no-year funding.

Office of Security and Strategic Information

The Committee includes \$7,470,000 for the Office of Security and Strategic Information to maintain the security of the Department's personnel, systems, and critical infrastructure.

PREVENTION AND PUBLIC HEALTH FUND

In fiscal year 2016, the level transferred from the fund after accounting for sequestration is \$932,000,000. The Committee includes bill language in section 224 of this act that requires that funds be transferred within 45 days of enactment of this act to the following accounts, for the following activities, and in the following amounts:

(In thousands of dollars)

Agency	Account	Program	Committee recommendation
ACL	Aging and Disability Services Programs.	Alzheimer's Disease Prevention Education and Outreach.	14,700
ACL	Aging and Disability Services Programs.	Chronic Disease Self Management.	7,600
ACL	Aging and Disability Services Programs.	Falls Prevention	4,750
CDC	Immunization and Respiratory Diseases.	Section 317 Immunization Grants.	210,300
CDC	Emerging and Zoonotic Infectious Diseases.	Epidemiology and Laboratory Capacity Grants.	40,000
CDC	Emerging and Zoonotic Infectious Diseases.	Healthcare Associated Infections	12,000
CDC	Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion.	Office of Smoking and Health (Tobacco Prevention/Media & Quit Lines).	156,650
CDC	Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion.	Breast Feeding Grants (Hospitals Promoting Breastfeeding).	8,000
CDC	Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion.	Million Hearts Program	4,000
CDC	Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion.	Nutrition, Physical Activity, & Obesity Base Activities.	35,000
CDC	Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion.	Heart Disease & Stroke Prevention Program	73,000
CDC	Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion.	Diabetes	73,000
CDC	Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion.	Cancer Prevention & Control	104,000
CDC	Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion.	Early Care Collaboratives	4,000
CDC	Environmental Health	Lead Poisoning Prevention	13,000
CDC	CDC-Wide Activities	Preventive Health and Health Services Block Grants.	160,000
SAMHSA	Mental Health	Suicide Prevention (Garrett Lee Smith).	12,000

GENERAL PROVISIONS

Section 201. The bill continues a provision placing a \$50,000 ceiling on official representation expenses.

Section 202. The bill continues a provision limiting the use of certain grant funds to pay individuals more than an annual rate of executive level II.

Section 203. The Committee recommendation continues a provision restricting the Secretary's use of taps for program evaluation activities unless a report is submitted to the Appropriations Committees of the House of Representatives and the Senate on the proposed use of funds.

Section 204. The Committee recommendation continues a provision authorizing the transfer of up to 2.5 percent of PHS Act funds for evaluation activities.

Section 205. The Committee recommendation continues a provision restricting transfers of appropriated funds and requires a 15-day notification to the Committees on Appropriations of the House of Representatives and the Senate Appropriations Committees.

Section 206. The bill retains a general provision allowing National Health Service Corps contracts to be canceled up to 60 days after award.

Section 207. The Committee recommendation continues a provision regarding requirements for family planning applicants.

Section 208. The Committee recommendation retains language which states that no provider services under title X of the PHS Act may be exempt from State laws regarding child abuse.

Section 209. The Committee recommendation retains language which restricts the use of funds to carry out the Medicare Advantage Program if the Secretary denies participation to an otherwise eligible entity.

Section 210. The bill continues a provision prohibiting the use of funds for lobbying activities related to gun control.

Section 211. The bill continues a provision that limits the assignment of certain public health personnel.

Section 212. The Committee recommendation retains a provision which facilitates the expenditure of funds for international health activities.

Section 213. The Committee continues a provision that permits CDC and the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry to transfer funds that are available for Individual Learning Accounts.

Section 214. The Committee recommendation continues a provision permitting the transfer of up to 3 percent of AIDS funds among ICs by the Director of NIH and the Director of the Office of AIDS Research at NIH.

Section 215. The Committee recommendation retains language which requires that the use of AIDS research funds be determined jointly by the Director of NIH and the Director of the Office of AIDS Research and that those funds be allocated directly to the Office of AIDS Research for distribution to the ICs consistent with the AIDS research plan.

Section 216. The Committee recommendation continues a provision authorizing the Director of NIH to enter into certain transactions to carry out research in support of the NIH Common Fund.

Section 217. The Committee recommendation continues a provision permitting NIH to use up to \$3,500,000 per project for improvements and repairs of facilities.

Section 218. The Committee recommendation retains a provision that transfers funds from NIH to HRSA and AHRQ, to be used for National Research Service Awards.

Section 219. The bill includes a new provision related to the NIH IDeA program.

Section 220. The bill includes a new provision related to the NEF.

Section 221. The bill retains a provision related to third party payments to NIH.

Section 222. The Committee recommendation retains a provision that provides BARDA with authority to enter into a multiyear contract for up to 10 years and to repurpose unused termination costs to pay contract invoices.

Section 223. The Committee recommendation continues a provision requiring a publicly available Web site that details expenditures from the PPH Fund.

Section 224. The Committee recommendation continues a provision transferring mandatory funds from section 4002 of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act to accounts within the Department for activities outlined under the heading "Prevention and Public Health Fund" in this report.

Section 225. The Committee recommendation retains a provision requiring CJs to include certain FTE information with respect to ACA.

Section 226. The bill includes a modified provision related to ACA exchange funding transparency.

Section 227. The bill includes a new provision related to ACA enrollment notifications.

Section 228. The bill continues a provision prohibiting funds for the Risk Corridor program.

Section 229. The bill includes a new provision prohibiting funds for the State-Based Exchanges.

Section 230. The bill includes a new provision prohibiting the use of funds for implementing the Dietary Guidelines.

Section 231. The bill includes a new provision cancelling unobligated balances at HRSA.

Section 232. The bill includes a new provision rescinding unobligated carry-over balances from previous appropriations acts for CDC's Individual Learning Accounts.

Section 233. The bill includes a new general provision rescinding \$250,000,000 in unobligated prior year balances from the unaccompanied children program.

TITLE III

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

EDUCATION FOR THE DISADVANTAGED

Appropriations, 2015	\$15,536,107,000
Budget estimate, 2016	16,592,546,000
Committee recommendation	15,455,802,000

The Committee recommends an appropriation of \$15,455,802,000 for education for the disadvantaged.

The programs in the Education for the Disadvantaged account help ensure that poor and low-achieving children are not left behind in the Nation's effort to raise the academic performance of all children and youth. Funds appropriated in this account primarily support activities in the 2016-2017 school year.

Grants to Local Educational Agencies

Title I grants to local educational agencies [LEAs] provide supplemental education funding, especially in high-poverty areas, for local programs that provide extra academic support to help raise the achievement of eligible students or, in the case of schoolwide programs, help all students in high-poverty schools meet challenging State academic standards. Title I grants are distributed through four formulas: basic, concentration, targeted, and education finance incentive grant.

The Committee recommends \$14,559,802,000 for the title I grants to LEAs program. Of the funds available for title I grants to LEAs, up to \$3,984,000 shall be available on October 1, 2015 for transfer to the Census Bureau for poverty updates; \$3,714,641,000 will become available on July 1, 2016; and \$10,841,177,000 will become available on October 1, 2016. The funds that become available on July 1, 2016, and October 1, 2016, will remain available for obligation through September 30, 2017.

The Committee recommendation includes a new general provision affirming that the Department of Education cannot require or incentivize, including requiring as a condition of waiver under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act [ESEA], the adoption of any specific instructional content, academic standards, academic assessments, or curriculum.

School Improvement Grants

The Committee recommendation includes \$450,000,000 for the School Improvement Grants [SIG] program.

The Committee continues authorities provided by prior appropriations acts that address several issues, including: expanding the number of schools that may receive funds through the program, which allows schools to be eligible for SIG if they are eligible for title I and have not made adequate yearly progress for at least 2 years or are in the State's lowest quintile of performance based on proficiency rates; allowing States to make subgrants of up to \$2,000,000 to each participating school for an award period of 5 years, increasing the amount and length of grant awards; allowing the Department to set-aside up to 5 percent of the SIG appropriation for national activities; providing flexibility from the prescrip-

tive school improvement strategies previously required by the Department, by allowing LEAs to implement a whole-school reform strategy based on at least a moderate level of evidence that it will improve student outcomes or an alternative State-determined school improvement strategy established by the State and approved by the Secretary; and allowing LEAs eligible under the Rural Education Achievement program to modify one element of a SIG model.

The Committee notes that SIG funds may be used for the coordination and provision of integrated student supports that address the non-academic needs of students.

The Committee is aware of effective and innovative models for school-wide reading improvement in rural communities. These models use highly individualized approaches to improving early literacy, and further focus on integrating and aligning out of school interventions, supplementing the traditional school day with aligned afterschool, summer, and parental engagement programs. The Committee encourages the Department to consider such interventions, particularly in rural communities, as part of efforts to improve low-performing schools and student outcomes.

Striving Readers Comprehensive Literacy Program

Due to budget constraints, the Committee recommendation does not include funding for the Striving Readers Comprehensive Literacy program. Fiscal year 2015 funding supported the fifth year of 5-year grants under this program. The Committee looks forward to results from this round of grants in considering future funding requests.

Migrant Education Program

The Committee recommends \$365,000,000 for the title I Migrant Education program.

This funding supports grants to State Education Agencies [SEAs] for programs to meet the special educational needs of the children of migrant agricultural workers and fishermen. Funding also supports activities to improve interstate and intrastate coordination of migrant education programs, as well as identify and improve services to the migrant student population.

Neglected and Delinquent

The Committee recommends \$46,000,000 for the title I Neglected and Delinquent program.

This program provides financial assistance to SEAs for education services to neglected and delinquent children and youth in State-run institutions and for juveniles in adult correctional institutions. States are authorized to set aside at least 15 percent, but not more than 30 percent, of their Neglected and Delinquent funds to help students in State-operated institutions make the transition into locally operated programs and to support the successful reentry of youth offenders who are age 20 or younger and have received a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent.

Evaluation

The Committee recommendation does not include specific funding for evaluation, as requested by the administration. Instead, the

Committee recommendation continues a general provision that clarifies the Department’s authority to reserve up to 0.5 percent of each ESEA appropriation in the bill, except for titles I and III of the ESEA, for evaluation of ESEA programs funded in this act. The Department is required to provide the Committees on Appropriations of the House of Representatives and the Senate, the Senate HELP Committee, and the House Education and Workforce Committee an operating plan describing the proposed uses of this evaluation authority as well as the source appropriation for such activities. In addition, not later than 45 days prior to the submission of the required operating plan, the Department shall brief the Committees above on the programs and activities being considered for inclusion in the plan. Further, the Committee expects the Department to continue to include in future CJs a discussion of its planned use of this authority.

Evaluation funds are used to support large-scale national surveys that examine how the title I program is contributing to student academic achievement. Funds also are used to evaluate State assessment and accountability systems and analyze the effectiveness of educational programs supported with title I funds.

Special Programs for Migrant Students

The Committee recommends \$35,000,000 for Special Programs for Migrant Students, which consist of HEP and CAMP.

HEP projects are 5-year grants to institutions of higher education and other nonprofit organizations to recruit migrant students ages 16 and older and provide the academic and support services needed to help them obtain a high school equivalency certificate and subsequently gain employment, attain admission to a postsecondary institution or a job training program, or join the military.

CAMP projects are 5-year grants to institutions of higher education and nonprofit organizations to provide tutoring, counseling, and financial assistance to migrant students during their first year of postsecondary education.

IMPACT AID

Appropriations, 2015	\$1,288,603,000
Budget estimate, 2016	1,288,603,000
Committee recommendation	1,288,603,000

The Committee recommends \$1,288,603,000 for the Impact Aid program.

Impact Aid provides financial assistance to school districts affected by the presence of Federal activities and federally owned land. These school districts face unique challenges because they must educate children living on federally owned land, such as military bases, while federally owned property is also exempt from local taxes, a primary source of revenue for local school districts.

The Committee bill retains language that provides for continued eligibility for students affected by the deployment or death of their military parent, as long as these children still attend schools in the same school district.

Basic Support Payments.—The Committee recommends \$1,151,233,000 for the Basic Support Payments program. Under

this statutory formula, payments are made on behalf of all categories of federally connected children, with a priority placed on making payments first to heavily impacted school districts and providing any remaining funds for regular basic support payments.

Payments for Children With Disabilities.—The Committee bill includes \$48,316,000 for Payments for Children With Disabilities. Under this program, additional payments are made for certain federally connected children eligible for services under IDEA.

Facilities Maintenance.—The Committee recommends \$4,835,000 for Facilities Maintenance. This activity provides funding for emergency repairs and comprehensive capital improvements to certain school facilities owned by the Department and used by LEAs to serve federally connected military dependent students. Funds appropriated for this purpose are available until expended.

Construction.—The Committee recommends \$17,406,000 for eligible LEAs for emergency repairs and modernization of school facilities.

The Committee recommendation includes bill language allowing these funds to be awarded entirely on a competitive basis and be available for obligation through September 30, 2017, as requested by the administration.

Payments for Federal Property.—The Committee recommends \$66,813,000 for Payments for Federal Property. These payments compensate LEAs specifically for revenue lost due to the removal of Federal property from local tax rolls, regardless of whether any federally connected children attend schools in the district.

The budget request proposed eliminating this program. The Committee recommendation rejects this elimination and notes that this funding represents a key component of fulfilling the Federal Government's commitment to school districts impacted by the presence of federally owned land.

SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAMS

Appropriations, 2015	\$4,402,671,000
Budget estimate, 2016	4,693,171,000
Committee recommendation	4,134,746,000

The Committee recommendation includes \$4,134,746,000 for the School Improvement Programs account.

State Grants for Improving Teacher Quality

The Committee recommends \$2,246,441,000 for State Grants for Improving Teacher Quality.

The appropriation for this program primarily supports activities associated with the 2016–2017 academic year. Of the funds provided, \$565,000,000 will become available on July 1, 2016, and \$1,681,441,000 will become available on October 1, 2016. These funds will remain available for obligation through September 30, 2017.

States and LEAs may use funds for a range of activities related to the certification, recruitment, professional development, and support of teachers and administrators. Activities may include reforming teacher certification and licensure requirements, addressing alternative routes to State certification of teachers, recruiting teachers and principals, and implementing teacher mentoring sys-

tems, teacher testing, merit pay, and merit-based performance systems. These funds may also be used by districts to hire teachers to reduce class sizes.

The Committee recommendation increases the set-aside within this program for the Supporting Effective Educator Development [SEED] program from 2.3 percent to 5 percent, as requested by the administration. The SEED program provides competitive grants to national not-for-profit organizations for recruiting, training, or providing professional enhancement activities for teachers and school leaders, particularly for high-need schools most likely to face shortages in these areas. These funds may be used to support such activities in civic learning. Up to 10 percent of the set-aside funds may be used for related research, outreach, evaluation, dissemination, and technical assistance.

The Committee continues to note that, based on a recent report by the Department of Education, only approximately 4 percent of funding under the Teacher Quality State Grants program is used for the professional development of school principals. The Committee strongly encourages the Department to provide guidance to SEAs about the availability of funding for such activities, including technical assistance on best practices in this area.

Mathematics and Science Partnerships

The Committee recommends \$141,299,000 for the Mathematics and Science Partnerships program.

At the recommended funding level, the ESEA requires the Department to award grants by formula to States for competitive awards to eligible partnerships, which must include an engineering, math, or science department of an institution of higher education and a high-need LEA. Partnerships will seek to improve the performance of students in the areas of math and science, including engineering, by bringing math and science teachers in elementary and secondary schools together with scientists, mathematicians, and engineers to increase the teachers' subject-matter knowledge and improve their teaching skills.

The Committee notes that investments in non-traditional STEM teaching activities, including robotics competitions, are a means to engage and inspire students to pursue further study or careers in STEM education.

Education Technology State Grants

The Committee recommendation does not include funding for Education Technology State Grants. Funding for this program was eliminated in fiscal year 2011. The budget request included \$200,000,000 for this activity.

Supplemental Education Grants

The Committee recommendation includes \$16,699,000 for supplemental education grants to the Republic of Marshall Islands [RMI] and the Federated States of Micronesia [FSM].

This grant program was authorized by the Compact of Free Association Amendments Act of 2003. These funds will be transferred from the Department to the Secretary of the Interior for grants to these entities. The Committee bill includes language requested in

the budget that allows the Secretary of Education to reserve 5 percent of these funds to provide FSM and RMI with technical assistance.

21st Century Community Learning Centers

The Committee recommends an appropriation of \$1,035,000,000 for the 21st Century Community Learning Centers [21st CCLC] program.

Funds are allocated to States by formula, which in turn, award at least 95 percent of their allocations to LEAs, community-based organizations, and other public and private entities. Grantees use these resources to establish or expand community learning centers that provide activities offering significant extended learning opportunities, such as before- and after-school programs, recreational activities, drug and violence prevention, and family literacy programs for students and related services to their families. Centers must target their services to students who attend schools that are eligible to operate a schoolwide program under title I of the ESEA or serve high percentages of students from low-income families.

The Committee directs the Department to submit a report to the Committees on Appropriations of the House of Representatives and the Senate within 90 days of enactment of this act on how States and local school districts are using waiver authority under this program, an optional waiver as part of the broader ESEA flexibility waivers, and what specific activities schools are funding with 21st CCLC funding under this authority.

The Committee recognizes that foster youth face unique hardships and challenges in completing their high school education and fully participating in the student experience. The Committee strongly encourages the Secretary to provide guidance and technical assistance to states to help them develop extracurricular programs specifically targeting foster youth.

State Assessments and Enhanced Assessment Instruments

The Committee recommends \$350,000,000 for the State Assessments and Enhanced Assessment Instruments program.

This program provides formula grants to States for developing and implementing standards and assessments required by the ESEA, and competitive grants to States, including consortia of States, to improve the quality, validity, and reliability of academic assessments. The Committee recommendation includes the full amount for State formula grants and due to budget constraints does not include funding for competitive grants.

Education for Homeless Children and Youth

For carrying out education activities authorized by title VII, subtitle B of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act, the Committee recommends \$65,042,000.

This program provides assistance to each State to support an office of the coordinator of education for homeless children and youth, to develop and implement State plans for educating homeless children, and to make subgrants to LEAs to support the education of those children. Grants are made to States based on the total that each State receives in title I grants to LEAs.

Under the McKinney-Vento Homeless Children and Youth Program, SEAs must ensure that homeless children and youth have equal access to the same free public education, including a public preschool education, as is provided to other children and youth.

The Committee bill also maintains language under the Education for the Disadvantaged account clarifying the availability of title I funds for services to homeless children and youths.

Training and Advisory Services

For Training and Advisory Services authorized by title IV of the Civil Rights Act, the Committee recommends \$6,575,000.

The funds provided will support awards to operate the 10 regional equity assistance centers [EACs]. Each EAC provides services to school districts upon request. Activities include disseminating information on successful practices and legal requirements related to nondiscrimination on the basis of race, color, sex, or national origin in education programs.

Education for Native Hawaiians

For programs for the education of Native Hawaiians, the Committee recommends \$32,397,000.

The Committee bill continues a provision that allows funding provided by this program to be used for construction.

Alaska Native Educational Equity

The Committee recommends \$31,453,000 for the Alaska Native Educational Equity Assistance program.

These funds address the severe educational handicaps of Alaska Native schoolchildren. Funds are used for the development of supplemental educational programs to benefit Alaska Natives. The Committee bill continues language that allows funding provided by this program to be used for construction. The Committee bill also includes language overriding the authorizing statute's requirement to make noncompetitive awards to certain organizations.

In awarding funds under this program, the Committee directs the Department to ensure the maximum participation of Alaska Native organizations and other required Alaska Native partners, ensure that all grantees have meaningful plans for consultation with Alaska Native leaders, and make every effort to ensure that Alaska Natives and Alaskans represent a significant proportion of peer reviewers for grant applications.

Rural Education

The Committee recommends \$169,840,000 for rural education programs.

The Committee expects that rural education funding will be equally divided between the Small, Rural School Achievement Program, which provides funds to LEAs that serve a small number of students, and the Rural and Low-Income School Program, which provides funds to LEAs that serve concentrations of poor students, regardless of the number of students served.

Comprehensive Centers

The Committee recommends \$40,000,000 for the Comprehensive Centers program.

These funds provide support to a network of comprehensive centers that are operated by research organizations, agencies, institutions of higher education, or partnerships thereof, and provide training and technical assistance on various issues to States, LEAs, and schools as identified through needs assessments undertaken in each region. The system currently includes 15 regional centers, which are charged with providing intensive technical assistance to SEAs to increase their capacity to assist LEAs and schools with meeting the goals of the ESEA, and 7 content centers, which are organized by topic area.

Due to budget restraints the Committee recommendation includes a decrease in funding for this program. However, the Committee strongly supports the establishment of a comprehensive center on students at risk of not attaining full literacy skills due to a disability. Such a center should identify or develop free or low cost evidence-based assessment tools for identifying students at-risk of not attaining full literacy skills due to a disability, including dyslexia impacting reading and writing, or developmental delay impacting reading, writing, language processing, comprehension, or executive function; identify evidence-based literacy instruction, strategies, and accommodations; identify or develop evidence-based professional development for teachers, paraprofessionals, principals, other school leaders, and specialized instructional support personnel to understand early indicators of students at risk of not attaining full literacy skills; and disseminate the products to regionally diverse state educational agencies, local educational agencies, regional educational agencies, and schools. The Committee looks forward to working with the Department in establishing a comprehensive center on this issue.

INDIAN EDUCATION

Appropriations, 2015	\$123,939,000
Budget estimate, 2016	173,939,000
Committee recommendation	123,939,000

The Committee recommends \$123,939,000 for Indian education programs.

Grants to Local Educational Agencies

For grants to LEAs, the Committee recommends \$100,381,000. These funds provide financial support to elementary and secondary school programs that serve Indian students, including preschool children. Funds are awarded on a formula basis to LEAs, schools supported and operated by the Department of the Interior/Bureau of Indian Education, and in some cases directly to Indian tribes.

Special Programs for Indian Children

The Committee recommends \$17,993,000 for special programs for Indian children.

Funds are used for demonstration grants to improve Indian student achievement from early childhood education through college

preparation programs, and for professional development grants for training Indians who are preparing to begin careers in teaching and school administration.

The Committee urges the Department to focus available resources on Native American language preservation and youth education activities. The Committee believes that Native language education programs are essential for tribal self-determination and improving educational outcomes for Native youth.

National Activities

The Committee recommends \$5,565,000 for national activities.

Funds are used to expand efforts to improve research, evaluation, and data collection on the status and effectiveness of Indian education programs, and to continue grants to tribal educational departments for education administration and planning.

INNOVATION AND IMPROVEMENT

Appropriations, 2015	\$1,102,111,000
Budget estimate, 2016	1,601,559,000
Committee recommendation	694,616,000

The Committee recommends \$694,616,000 for programs within the Innovation and Improvement account.

The Committee remains concerned that competitive grant programs often leave out rural areas and other high-need communities that sometimes simply do not have the capacity to compete against better resourced or national organizations for limited funding. The Committee directs the Department to ensure that competitive grant programs, including but not limited to the Charter Schools, Innovative Approaches to Literacy, Arts in Education, and SEED, support activities in rural communities.

Investing in Innovation

The Committee recommendation does not include funding for the Investing in Innovation [i3] program. The i3 program, which was established in the Recovery Act and has never been authorized, provides funding for replicating education programs that meet the highest level of evidence; expanding those with significant levels of evidence; and supporting promising practices for which there is some level of appropriate research. The Committee supports such evidence-based approaches to improve student outcomes but due to budget constraints has not included funding for this program and instead focused funding to core education formula grant programs. The Committee will consider future funding requests pending authorization of the program.

High School Redesign

The Committee recommendation does not include funding for a new High School Redesign program. The budget request included \$125,000,000 for this new activity.

Teacher and Principal Pathways

The Committee recommendation does not include funding for a new Teacher and Principal Pathways program. The budget request

proposed to consolidate several teacher and school leadership programs into this new program.

Transition to Teaching

The Committee recommendation does not include funding for the Transition to Teaching program which provides grants to help support efforts to recruit, train, and place nontraditional teaching candidates into teaching positions and to support them during their first years in the classroom. Instead, the Committee recommendation includes an increase in the SEED set-aside within the Teacher Quality State Grants program, which similarly provides competitive grants for recruiting, training, or providing professional enhancement activities for teachers and school leaders, particularly in high-need LEAs.

School Leadership

The Committee recommendation does not include funding for the School Leadership program. The program provides competitive grants to assist high-need LEAs to recruit and train principals and assistant principals through activities such as professional development and training programs. Instead, the Committee recommendation includes an increase in the SEED set-aside within the Teacher Quality State Grants program, which similarly provides competitive grants for recruiting, training, or providing professional enhancement activities for teachers and school leaders, particularly in high-need LEAs.

Charter Schools

The Committee recommends a total of \$273,172,000, an increase of \$20,000,000 above fiscal year 2015 for the support of charter schools.

Within the total, the Committee recommendation includes \$155,000,000 for SEA grants, including non-SEA eligible applicant grants; \$85,000,000 for grants to make multiple awards to charter management organizations and other entities for the replication and expansion of successful charter school models; up to \$9,000,000 for State Facilities incentives; not less than \$13,000,000 for the Credit Enhancement for Charter Schools Facilities program; and not less than \$11,000,000 for national activities designed to support local, State, and national efforts to increase the number of high-quality charter schools.

Charter Schools Grants support the planning, development, and initial implementation of charter schools. SEAs that have authority under State law to approve charter schools that are eligible to compete for grants. If an eligible SEA does not participate, charter schools from the State may apply directly to the Secretary.

Under the State facilities program, the Department awards 5-year competitive grants to States that operate per-pupil facilities aid programs for charters schools. Federal funds are used to match State-funded programs to provide charter schools with additional resources for charter school facilities financing.

The credit enhancement program provides assistance to help charter schools meet their facility needs. Funds are provided on a competitive basis to public and nonprofit entities to leverage non-

Federal funds that help charter schools obtain school facilities through purchase, lease, renovation, and construction.

The Committee bill continues language that allows charter school funds to be used for preschool programs in charter schools.

Magnet Schools Assistance

The Committee recommends \$85,000,000 for the Magnet Schools Assistance program.

This program supports grants to LEAs to establish and operate magnet schools that are part of a court-ordered or federally approved voluntary desegregation plan. Magnet schools are designed to attract substantial numbers of students from different social, economic, ethnic, and racial backgrounds. Grantees may use funds for planning and promotional materials, salaries of instructional staff, and the purchase of technology, educational materials, and equipment.

Fund for the Improvement of Education

The Committee recommends an appropriation of \$62,815,000 for FIE.

Preschool Development Grants.—The Committee recommendation does not include funding for Preschool Development Grants, which have never been authorized. This program was funded under FIE in fiscal year 2015; the budget request included \$750,000,000, funded within a new account. This program, first funded in fiscal year 2014, provides competitive grants to States to develop or expand preschool programs for 4-year-olds. The Committee is concerned that funding another discretionary competitive grant program to provide early childhood education contributes to an already complicated system of early childhood care and education programs at the local level. This bill alone provides funding for Head Start and the Child Care and Development Fund, which itself includes funds from TANF and SSBG, which provide early childhood care and education for children from birth to age 5. States themselves spend approximately \$5.5 billion on State-funded preschool programs. These programs are administered by different agencies and levels of government, and each come with their own eligibility and reporting requirements. The Committee continues to support funding for these core early childhood care and education programs, and efforts to better coordinate these existing programs.

In 2012, a Government Accountability Office report (GAO-12-342SP) identified 45 Federal programs that provide or may support related services to children from birth through age 5, as well as five tax provisions that subsidize private expenditures in this area. The Child Care and Development Block Grant Act of 2014 requires the Secretaries of HHS and Education to conduct an interdepartmental review of all early learning programs, develop a plan for eliminating duplicative programs, and make recommendation to Congress for streamlining such programs. The Committee looks forward to this report and believes the administration should complete this review before considering funding relatively new programs in this area.

Innovative Approaches to Literacy.—Within programs of national significance, the Committee includes \$25,000,000 for the Innovative

Approaches to Literacy program, the same as the fiscal year 2015 funding level. The budget request does not include funding for this program. The Innovative Approaches to Literacy program provides competitive grants to national not-for-profit organizations and school libraries for providing books and childhood literacy activities to children and families living in high-need communities. The Committee continues to expect that no less than 50 percent of these funds to be awarded to school libraries proposing high-quality projects for increasing access to a wide range of print and electronic resources that provide learning opportunities to all students, but particularly those less likely to have access to such materials at home.

The Committee directs the Department to include in future CJs program performance information for this program covering all applicable years, consistent with data provided for other similar programs.

Arts in Education.—Within the amount for FIE, the Committee includes \$25,000,000 for the Arts in Education program, the same as the fiscal year 2015 funding level and the budget request. The funding is used for competitive awards for national nonprofit organizations engaged in arts education, professional development activities, and model arts education programs. Funds also are used for evaluation and dissemination activities, as well as to support a partnership with the National Endowment for the Arts.

Javits Gifted and Talented Students.—Within FIE, the Committee also recommends \$11,000,000, an increase of \$1,000,000 above fiscal year 2015, for the Javits Gifted and Talented Students Education program. The budget request included \$9,650,000. Funds are used for awards to State and local educational agencies, institutions of higher education, and other public and private agencies for research, demonstration, and training activities designed to enhance the capability of elementary and secondary schools to meet the special educational needs of gifted and talented students, including those from disadvantaged and underrepresented populations.

Presidential and Congressional History Teaching Academies.—Within the total for FIE, the Committee recommendation includes \$1,815,000 for Presidential and Congressional History Teaching Academies, as authorized by the American History and Civics Education Act of 2004. This supports summer residential academies to help teachers and outstanding students learn more about these important subjects and share their knowledge with students and classmates.

Teacher Incentive Fund

The Committee recommendation includes \$225,000,000 for TIF.

The goals of TIF are to improve student achievement by increasing teacher and principal effectiveness; reform compensation systems to reward gains in student achievement; increase the number of effective teachers teaching low-income, minority, and disadvantaged students, and students in hard-to-staff subjects; and other activities designed to increase the effectiveness of teachers, principals, and other personnel in high-need schools.

Ready-To-Learn Television

The Committee recommendation includes \$25,741,000 for the Ready-to-Learn Television program.

This program is intended to use the power and reach of public television to help prepare children, especially disadvantaged children, enter and succeed in school.

Advanced Placement

The Committee recommends \$22,888,000 for Advanced Placement [AP] programs.

Funds have supported two programs: the AP Test Fee program and the AP Incentive [API] program. The purpose of both is to aid State and local efforts to increase access to AP and International Baccalaureate [IB] classes and tests for low-income students. Under the test fee program, the Department makes awards to SEAs to enable them to cover part or all of the cost of test fees of low-income students who are enrolled in an AP or IB class and plan to take an AP or IB test. Under the API program, the Department makes 3-year competitive awards to SEAs, LEAs, or national nonprofit educational entities to expand access for low-income individuals to AP programs through activities including teacher training; development of pre-advanced placement courses; coordination and articulation between grade levels to prepare students for academic achievement in AP or IB courses; books and supplies; and participation in online AP or IB courses. Under the authorizing statute, the Department must give priority to funding the test fee program.

SAFE SCHOOLS AND CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION

Appropriations, 2015	\$223,315,000
Budget estimate, 2016	349,561,000
Committee recommendation	120,314,000

The Committee recommends a total of \$120,314,000 for activities to promote safe schools, healthy students, and citizenship education.

Promise Neighborhoods

The Committee recommendation includes \$37,000,000 for the Promise Neighborhoods program. This funding should be used to support the continuation costs of current grantees.

This program awards competitive grants to not-for-profit, community-based organizations for the development of comprehensive neighborhood programs designed to combat the effects of poverty and improve educational and life outcomes for children and youth, from birth through college. Each Promise Neighborhood grantee serves a high-poverty urban neighborhood or rural community.

The Department has awarded 1-year planning grants to develop and plan for providing a continuum of services and supports for the children and youth in a particular neighborhood, and multiple-year implementation grants to organizations with feasible plans for achieving the goals of the program. The Committee recommendation will support the continuation costs of the seven remaining implementation grants.

The Committee continues to note that at least one implementation grantee has included college savings accounts as part of its plan for providing a high-quality continuum of integrated cradle to college career services. The Committee is interested in understanding the number of grantees that have included college savings accounts in their plans and the impact the use of college savings accounts is having on the college-going behavior of participating students.

Safe and Drug-Free National Activities

The Committee recommendation includes \$60,000,000 for the national activities portion of the Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Communities program, including up to \$5,000,000 for Project SERV. This funding will help schools address the consequences of their students witnessing or being the victim of violence and other root causes of unhealthy school climates.

Elementary and Secondary School Counseling

The Committee recommendation includes \$23,314,000 for elementary and secondary school counseling. The Committee recommendation will help support the continuation costs of current grantees.

Carol M. White Physical Education for Progress Program

Due to budget constraints the Committee recommendation does not include funding for the physical education program. Instead, the Committee has focused funding on core and flexible funding streams, such as title I, that allow States, LEAs, and local schools to determine how to best use limited resources.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE ACQUISITION

Appropriations, 2015	\$737,400,000
Budget estimate, 2016	773,400,000
Committee recommendation	712,021,000

The Committee recommends an appropriation of \$712,021,000 for the English Language Acquisition program.

The Department makes formula grants to States based on each State's share of the Nation's limited-English-proficient and recent immigrant student population. The program is designed to increase the capacity of States and school districts to address the needs of these students. The authorizing statute requires that 6.5 percent of the appropriation be used to support national activities, which include professional development activities designed to increase the number of highly qualified teachers serving limited-English-proficient students; a National Clearinghouse for English Language Acquisition and Language Instructional Programs; and evaluation activities. National activities funds shall be available for 2 years.

The Committee bill continues language that requires the Secretary to use a 3-year average of the most recent data available from the American Community Survey for calculating allocations to all States under this program.

The Committee recommendation represents a decrease from the fiscal year 2015 funding level, in part, because it does not include \$14,000,000 provided in fiscal year 2015 specifically to address

costs associated with a significant increase in unaccompanied children during fiscal year 2015. The budget request did not include funding for this activity.

SPECIAL EDUCATION

Appropriations, 2015	\$12,522,358,000
Budget estimate, 2016	12,822,358,000
Committee recommendation	12,636,817,000

The Committee recommends an appropriation of \$12,636,817,000 for special education programs.

Grants to States

The Committee recommendation includes \$11,597,848,000 for IDEA Part B Grants to States. This program provides formula grants to assist States, outlying areas, and other entities in meeting the costs of providing special education and related services for children with disabilities. States pass along most of these funds to LEAs, but may reserve some for program monitoring, enforcement, technical assistance, and other activities.

The appropriation for this program primarily supports activities associated with the 2016–2017 academic year. Of the funds available for this program, \$2,314,465,000 will become available on July 1, 2016, and \$9,283,383,000 will become available on October 1, 2016. These funds will remain available for obligation through September 30, 2017.

As requested by the administration, the Committee continues bill language capping the Department of the Interior set-aside at the prior year level, adjusted by the lower of the increase in inflation or the change in the appropriation for grants to States. This provision also would prevent a decrease in the amount to be transferred in case the funding for this program decreases or does not change. The bill also continues language included in prior year appropriations acts, and requested by the administration, clarifying several provisions of the IDEA, and providing authority concerning certain maintenance of effort [MOE] requirements.

Preschool Grants

The Committee recommends \$363,238,000 for Preschool Grants. This program provides formula grants to States to assist them in making available special education and related services for children with disabilities aged 3 through 5. States distribute the bulk of the funds to LEAs. States must serve all eligible children with disabilities aged 3 through 5 and have an approved application under the IDEA.

Grants for Infants and Families

The Committee recommends \$453,556,000 for the Grants for Infants and Families program under part C of the IDEA. Part C of the IDEA authorizes formula grants to States, outlying areas, and other entities to implement statewide systems for providing early intervention services to all children with disabilities, ages 2 and younger, and their families. The IDEA also gives States the option of extending eligibility for part C services to children 3 and older

if they were previously served under part C and will continue to be served until entrance to kindergarten.

State Personnel Development

The Committee recommends \$35,000,000 for the State Personnel Development program. Ninety percent of funds must be used for professional development activities. The program supports grants to SEAs to help them reform and improve their personnel preparation and professional development related to early intervention, educational, and transition services that improve outcomes for students with disabilities. The bill includes language proposed in the budget request that allows funds under the program to be used for program evaluation.

Technical Assistance and Dissemination

The Committee recommends \$51,928,000 for Technical Assistance and Dissemination. This program supports awards for technical assistance, model demonstration projects, the dissemination of useful information, and other activities. Funding supports activities that are designed to improve the services provided under the IDEA.

Within the total, the Committee recommendation includes \$9,500,000, an increase of \$1,917,000 above the fiscal year 2015 funding level and the budget request, to support activities authorized by the Special Olympics Sport and Empowerment Act, including Project UNIFY. This funding supports efforts to expand Special Olympics programs and the design and implementation of Special Olympics education programs that can be integrated into classroom instruction and are consistent with academic content standards.

Personnel Preparation

The Committee recommends \$81,700,000 for the Personnel Preparation program.

Funds support competitive awards to help address State-identified needs for personnel who are qualified to work with children with disabilities, including special education teachers and related services personnel. The program is required to fund several other broad areas, including training leadership personnel and personnel who work with children with low-incidence disabilities, and providing enhanced support for beginning special educators.

Parent Information Centers

The Committee recommends \$26,500,000 for Parent Information Centers.

This program makes awards to parent organizations to support parent training and information centers, including community parent resource centers. These centers provide training and information to meet the needs of parents of children with disabilities living in the areas served by the centers, particularly underserved parents, and parents of children who may be inappropriately identified.

Technology and Media Services

The Committee recommends \$27,047,000 for Technology and Media Services. This program makes competitive awards to support the development, demonstration, and use of technology and educational media activities of value to children with disabilities.

The Committee recognizes the progress made with tools and services provided under the Technology and Media Services program that have allowed more than 320,000 students free access to more than 280,000 books in multiple digitally accessible formats. The Committee continues to support these activities funded within this account, and the expansion of these activities to reach additional students, with a focus on underserved areas.

REHABILITATION SERVICES AND DISABILITY RESEARCH

Appropriations, 2015	\$3,709,853,000
Budget estimate, 2016	3,532,109,000
Committee recommendation	3,487,864,000

The Workforce Investment and Opportunity Act [WIOA] of 2014 moved several programs within Rehabilitation Services and Disability Research from the Department of Education to the Administration for Community Living at the Department of HHS. The Committee recommendation supports this reorganization.

Vocational Rehabilitation State Grants

The Committee recommends \$3,391,770,000 in mandatory funding for Vocational Rehabilitation [VR] State Grants.

State Grants assist States in providing a range of services to help persons with physical and mental disabilities prepare for and engage in meaningful employment.

The Rehabilitation Act requires that not less than 1 percent and not more than 1.5 percent of the appropriation for VR State Grants be set aside for Grants for American Indians.

The Committee recommendation continues bill language allowing the Department to use unobligated VR State grant funds that remain available subsequent to the reallocation process, to be used for innovative activities to improve outcomes for individuals with disabilities.

Client Assistance State Grants

The Committee recommends \$12,000,000 in discretionary funds for Client Assistance State Grants.

This program funds State formula grants to help VR clients or client applicants understand the benefits available to them. States must operate client assistance programs in order to receive VR State Grant funds.

Training

The Committee recommends \$24,000,000 for training rehabilitation personnel. This program supports grants to provide training to new VR staff, or upgrade the qualifications of existing staff. The Committee recommendation will support the continuation of current grants.

Demonstration and Training Programs

The Committee recommendation does not include funding for demonstration and training. This program provides grants to States and nonprofit organizations to develop innovative methods and comprehensive services to help individuals with disabilities achieve satisfactory vocational outcomes. Instead, the Committee continues bill language allowing the Department to use unobligated VR State Grant funds for innovative approaches to improve outcomes for individuals with disabilities. From fiscal year 2012 to 2014 approximately \$216,000,000 has been made available for such activities under that authority.

Protection and Advocacy of Individual Rights

The Committee recommends \$17,650,000 for the Protection and Advocacy of Individual Rights program.

This program provides grants to agencies to protect and advocate for the legal and human rights of persons with disabilities who are ineligible for the protection and advocacy services available through the Developmental Disabilities Assistance and Bill of Rights Act or the Protection and Advocacy for Individuals with Mental Illness Act.

Supported Employment State Grants

The Committee recommendation does not include funding for the Supported Employment State Grants Program. The fiscal year 2015 budget request proposed eliminating this program because supported employment activities funded under this program had become an integral part of the larger VR State Grants program, funded in large part with mandatory funding, and eliminating this program would reduce unnecessary administration burden at the national, State and local levels. Despite changes to the Supported Employment State Grants program in WIOA, the Committee supports this consolidation and notes that funding for the VR State Grants programs, which can be and is used for the same purposes, will increase by \$56,696,000 in fiscal year 2016. The Committee directs the Department to help ensure that State agencies continue to invest appropriate levels of their resources in supported employment, and particularly extended services to youth with the most significant disabilities, consistent with the changes in WIOA.

Independent Living Services for Older Individuals Who Are Blind

The Committee recommends \$33,317,000 for Independent Living State Grants.

This program supports assistance to individuals over age 55 to help them adjust to their blindness and continue to live independently, including daily living skills training, counseling, community integration information and referral, the provision of low-vision and communication devices, and low-vision screening.

Helen Keller National Center

The Committee recommends \$9,127,000 for the Helen Keller National Center for Deaf-Blind Youth and Adults.

The Helen Keller National Center consists of a national headquarters in Sands Point, New York, with a residential training and rehabilitation facility where deaf-blind persons receive intensive specialized services; a network of 10 regional field offices that provide referral and counseling assistance to deaf-blind persons; and an affiliate network of agencies.

SPECIAL INSTITUTIONS FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

AMERICAN PRINTING HOUSE FOR THE BLIND

Appropriations, 2015	\$24,931,000
Budget estimate, 2016	24,931,000
Committee recommendation	24,931,000

The Committee recommends \$24,931,000 to help support APH.

APH provides educational materials to students who are legally blind and enrolled in programs below the college level. The Federal subsidy provides approximately 72 percent of APH's total sales income. Materials are distributed free of charge to schools and States through per capita allotments based on the total number of students who are blind. Materials provided include textbooks and other educational aids in Braille, large type, recorded form, and computer applications. Appropriated funds may be used for staff salaries and expenses, as well as equipment purchases and other acquisitions consistent with the purpose of the Act to Promote the Education of the Blind.

The Committee continues to recognize that students who are blind or have a vision loss must have equal access to the same education content and should receive that information at the same time as their sighted peers if they are to achieve academically. Accordingly, the Committee continues to support implementation of APH's Resources with Enhanced Accessibility for Learning [REAL] plan, and includes no less than \$475,000 for such activities, the same as the fiscal year 2015 level. The REAL plan supports new advances in software and hardware technology to ensure that students with vision loss receive high-quality educational material in a timely manner and in the appropriate formats required to meet individual student learning needs.

NATIONAL TECHNICAL INSTITUTE FOR THE DEAF

Appropriations, 2015	\$67,016,000
Budget estimate, 2016	67,016,000
Committee recommendation	69,016,000

The Committee recommends \$69,016,000 for the National Technical Institute for the Deaf [NTID].

NTID, located on the campus of the Rochester Institute of Technology in Rochester, New York, was created by Congress in 1965 to provide a residential facility for postsecondary technical training and education for persons who are deaf. NTID also provides support services for students who are deaf, trains professionals in the field of deafness, and conducts applied research.

The Committee recommendation includes \$2,000,000 to establish a formal regional partnership with at least one organization to expand the geographic reach of activities and services supported by NTID for individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing, leveraging NTID's expertise in this area. This should include a focus on promoting training and post-secondary preparation in STEM fields, which could include a focus on exposing students to intense training in targeted subjects; working with NTID faculty to develop and deliver post-secondary preparation programs for students; providing professional development for teachers; and developing partnerships with business and industry to promote employment opportunities.

GALLAUDET UNIVERSITY

Appropriations, 2015	\$120,275,000
Budget estimate, 2016	120,275,000
Committee recommendation	120,275,000

The Committee recommends \$120,275,000 for Gallaudet University.

Gallaudet University is a private, not-for-profit institution offering undergraduate and continuing education programs for students who are deaf, as well as graduate programs in fields related to deafness for students who are hearing and deaf. The university conducts basic and applied research related to hearing impairments and provides public service programs for the deaf community.

This funding also supports the Model Secondary School for the Deaf, which serves as a laboratory for educational experimentation and development; disseminates curricula, materials, and models of instruction for students who are deaf; and prepares adolescents who are deaf for postsecondary academic or vocational education or the workplace. The university's Kendall Demonstration Elementary School develops and provides instruction for children from infancy through age 15.

CAREER, TECHNICAL, AND ADULT EDUCATION

Appropriations, 2015	\$1,707,686,000
Budget estimate, 2016	1,915,686,000
Committee recommendation	1,669,731,000

Career and Technical Education

The Committee recommends \$1,122,019,000 for the Career and Technical Education [CTE] account.

State Grants.—The Committee recommends \$1,117,598,000 for CTE State grants. The budget request included an increase of \$200,000,000 for this program for a new American Technical Training Fund, a new competitive grant program as part of a larger re-authorization proposal for the Carl D Perkins Career and Technical Education Act. The Committee recommendation does not include funding for that activity.

Funds provided under the State grant program assist States, localities, and outlying areas to expand and improve their CTE program and help ensure equal access to CTE for populations with special needs. Persons assisted range from secondary students in prevocational courses through adults who need retraining to adapt to changing technological and labor market conditions. Funds are distributed according to a formula based on State population and State per capita income.

Under the Indian and Hawaiian Natives programs, competitive grants are awarded to federally recognized Indian tribes or tribal organizations and to organizations primarily serving and representing Hawaiian Natives for services that are additional to what these groups receive under other provisions of the Perkins Act.

Of the funds available for this program, \$326,598,000 will become available July 1, 2016, and \$791,000,000 will become available on October 1, 2016. These funds will remain available for obligation until September 30, 2017.

National Programs.—The Committee recommends \$4,421,000 to support research, development, demonstration, dissemination, evaluation, and assessment of activities aimed at improving the quality and effectiveness of CTE.

Adult Education

The Committee recommends \$547,712,000 for Adult Education programs.

Adult Education State Grants.—The Committee recommendation includes \$540,000,000 for Adult Education State Grants, which provides grants to States for programs that assist adults in becoming literate and in obtaining the skills necessary for employment and self-sufficiency.

National Leadership Activities.—The Committee recommends \$7,712,000 for adult education national leadership activities.

STUDENT FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

Appropriations, 2015	\$24,198,210,000
Budget estimate, 2016	24,198,210,000
Committee recommendation	24,129,352,000

The Committee recommends an appropriation of \$24,129,352,000 for programs under the Student Financial Assistance account.

Federal Pell Grant Program

The Committee recommends \$22,475,352,000 in discretionary funding for the Pell grant program. Pell grants provide need-based financial assistance that helps undergraduate students and their families defray a portion of the costs of postsecondary education. Awards are determined according to a statutory need-analysis formula that takes into account a student's family income and assets, household size, and the number of family members, excluding parents, attending postsecondary institutions.

The Committee recommendation is more than sufficient to support an increase in the maximum Pell grant award, from \$5,775 for the 2015–16 school year to an estimated \$5,915 for the 2016–17 school year. The Pell grant program is funded partly through the discretionary appropriations process and partly through mandatory funding. As long as the discretionary portion of funding is sufficient to support \$4,860 of the maximum award, mandatory funding supports an increase in the overall maximum award based on changes in the Consumer Price Index [CPI]. The Department will determine the exact amount of the maximum award next year based on CPI data available at the end of the 2015 calendar year.

The Committee notes that CBOs current estimates of Pell Grant program costs are significantly lower than their 2014 baseline used in developing the fiscal year 2015 appropriations bill. As a result, the Department is expected to carry over significantly more funding into fiscal year 2016 than estimated last year. Specifically, actual fiscal year 2014 costs were \$554,000,000 lower than estimated, meaning additional unobligated balances were carried into fiscal year 2015 than was expected last year, and current fiscal year 2015 estimated costs are \$848,000,000 lower than estimated last year. Based on these updated estimates for fiscal year 2014 and 2015, the Committee recommendation rescinds \$300,000,000 in unobligated balances from fiscal year 2015.

The Pell scoring rule, section 406 of H. Con. Res. 95, requires the Committee to fully fund the Pell grant program based on the Congressional Budget Office's [CBO] program cost estimate for the upcoming award year. Including estimated unobligated balances carried forward from fiscal year 2015 to 2016, the Committee recommendation provides \$1,788,000,000 in additional funding above what is required to support estimated discretionary program costs in fiscal year 2016. This surplus funding will not be used in fiscal year 2016 for the 2016–17 school year and will be carried over to be used to support program costs in the 2017–18 school year.

Federal Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grant Program

The Committee recommends \$704,000,000 for the Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grant [SEOG] program.

The SEOG program provides funds to approximately 3,800 postsecondary institutions for need-based grants to more than 1.6 million undergraduate students. Institutions must contribute at least 25 percent toward SEOG awards. Students qualify for grants of up

to \$4,000 by demonstrating financial need. Priority is given to Pell grant recipients with exceptional need.

Federal Work-Study Program

The Committee bill provides \$950,000,000 for the Federal Work-Study [FWS] program.

This program provides grants to approximately 3,400 institutions and helps nearly 700,000 undergraduate, graduate, and professional students meet the costs of postsecondary education through part-time employment. Institutions must provide at least 25 percent of student earnings.

Within the total for FWS, the Committee recommendation includes \$8,390,000 for the Work Colleges program authorized under section 448 of the HEA.

STUDENT AID ADMINISTRATION

Appropriations, 2015	\$1,396,924,000
Budget estimate, 2016	1,581,854,000
Committee recommendation	1,361,700,000

The Committee recommends \$1,361,700,000 for the Student Aid Administration account. These funds are available until September 30, 2017, and support the Department's student aid management expenses.

The Committee recommendation includes \$640,000,000 for administrative costs and \$721,700,000 for loan servicing activities.

The Bipartisan Budget Act of 2013 eliminated mandatory funding that supported the Not-for-Profit [NFP] servicer program and two of the TIVAS contracts. To avoid disrupting student borrowers whose loan servicing was supported with that mandatory funding, Congress provided a total increase of approximately \$396,000,000 for student loan servicing activities in fiscal years 2014 and 2015, the vast majority of which is due to the elimination of this mandatory funding source. The Committee notes that this elimination does not reduce the Federal responsibility to service student loans but only shifts the costs from mandatory funding to discretionary funding subject to discretionary spending caps.

The Committee directs the Department to continue to provide quarterly reports detailing its obligation plan by quarter for student aid administrative activities broken out by servicer and activity. Further, any reallocation of funds between administrative costs and servicing activities within this account should be treated as a reprogramming of funds, and the Committee should be notified in advance of any such changes.

Not-for-Profit Servicers [NFPs].—The Committee includes new bill language requiring the Department to allocate no less than 50 percent of new student loan borrower accounts to NFPs. The Committee commends the Department for developing a single, common set of performance metrics for evaluating the performance of the 11 Federal loan servicers. However, the Department only recently began allocating new accounts, limited to 25 percent of new accounts, to NFPs. The Committee strongly supports the allocation of new student loan accounts based purely on the performance and capacity of servicers, to help ensure high-quality service for borrowers. Until the Department awards a new student loan servicing

contract, the Committee believes allocating no less than 50 percent of new loans, and more if warranted by the performance and capacity of servicers, to NFPs will ensure more comparable portfolios across all servicers, consistent with the stated plan of the Department. Similarly, the Committee is also concerned that the Department has unnecessarily restricted consumer choice by only permitting student and parent loan borrowers to select from among the four TIVA servicers when choosing a servicer for their consolidation loans. The Committee directs the Department to permit borrowers to choose from among all 11 Federal loan servicers. Finally, the Committee directs the Department to brief the Committees on Appropriations of the House of Representatives and the Senate within 30 days of enactment of this act on how they are carrying out these directives, and how they plan to ensure that student loan allocations, including consolidations, are awarded based on performance and capacity across all eligible servicers as part of future contracts.

Higher Education Regulations.—The Committee recommendation includes bill language prohibiting funding in this act for several recent regulations, until the Higher Education Act [HEA] is reauthorized, including: developing a post-secondary institution rating system; administratively defining the phrase “gainful employment” included in the HEA; establishing requirements governing the State authorization process for higher education programs; establishing a Federal definition of the term “credit hour”; and establishing a Federal framework for evaluating teacher preparation programs. The Committee supports many of the goals of these regulations, but each represents a significant expansion of administrative authority, and in the case of the post-secondary institution ratings system, a misguided use of limited resources. The Committee strongly believes the issues addressed by these regulations should part of the normal legislative and authorization process. Accordingly, the Committee prohibits the Department from moving forward with these administrative regulations and actions until the HEA is reauthorized.

Taskforce on Higher Education Regulations.—In 2013, a bipartisan group of Senators commissioned a Task Force on Government Regulation of Higher Education to examine the burden of Federal regulations on colleges and universities. In February 2015 the task force issued a final report concluding that many regulations are unnecessarily long and ambiguous; the cost of compliance has become particularly burdensome; many regulations are unrelated to education, student safety, or stewardship of Federal funds; and they can be a barrier to access, and innovation in higher education. The Committee urges the Department of Education to minimize the costs imposed both directly and indirectly on higher education through Federal rules and regulations as it seeks to address the problems associated with college access and affordability. The Committee further encourages the Department of Education to review and implement those recommendations identified in the Task Force report that could be addressed through administrative action to alleviate the unnecessary financial burden placed on colleges and universities and improve the overall Federal regulatory process.

Post-Secondary Compliance Calendar.—The Committee is concerned that the Department of Education has failed to implement

section 482(e) of the Higher Education Act, as amended by the Higher Education Opportunity Act of 2008, which directs the Secretary to annually produce a compliance calendar with a schedule of all the reporting and disclosure requirements for colleges and universities. Publication and distribution of this calendar will greatly help colleges and universities understand, plan for, and meet their Federal compliance obligations and requirements. The Committee therefore strongly encourages the Secretary to produce a compliance calendar within 60 days of enactment of this act.

HIGHER EDUCATION

Appropriations, 2015	\$1,924,839,000
Budget estimate, 2016	2,072,045,000
Committee recommendation	1,783,510,000

The Committee recommends an appropriation of \$1,783,510,000 for higher education programs.

Aid for Institutional Development

The Committee recommends \$514,114,000 for Aid for Institutional Development.

Strengthening Institutions.—The Committee bill recommends \$78,048,000 to provide competitive, 1-year planning and 5-year development grants for institutions with a significant percentage of financially needy students and low educational and general expenditures per student in comparison with similar institutions. Applicants may use these funds to develop faculty, strengthen academic programs, improve institutional management, and expand student services.

Hispanic-Serving Institutions [HSIs].—The Committee recommends \$97,224,000 for competitive grants to institutions at which Hispanic students make up at least 25 percent of enrollment. Funds may be used for acquisition, rental, or lease of scientific or laboratory equipment; renovation of instructional facilities; development of faculty; support for academic programs; institutional management; and purchase of educational materials. In addition to the Committee-recommended level, the HCERA provides \$100,000,000 in mandatory funding in each fiscal year through 2019 to support HSIs in the development of STEM and articulation programs.

Promoting Postbaccalaureate Opportunities for Hispanic Americans.—The Committee recommends \$8,722,000 for competitive, 5-year grants to HSIs to help Hispanic Americans gain entry into and succeed in graduate study. Institutions may use funding to support low-income students through outreach programs; academic support services; mentoring and financial assistance; acquisition, rental, or lease of scientific or laboratory equipment; construction and other facilities improvements; and purchase of educational materials.

Strengthening Historically Black Colleges and Universities.—The Committee recommends \$220,698,000 for the Strengthening HBCUs program. The program makes formula grants to HBCUs that may be used to purchase equipment; construct and renovate facilities; develop faculty; support academic programs; strengthen institutional management; enhance fundraising activities; provide

tutoring and counseling services to students; and conduct outreach to elementary and secondary school students. In addition to the Committee-recommended level, this program will receive \$85,000,000 in mandatory funding through the HCERA in each fiscal year through 2019.

Strengthening Historically Black Graduate Institutions [HBGIs].—The Committee recommends \$57,075,000 for the Strengthening HBGIs program. This program provides 5-year grants to provide scholarships for low-income students and academic and counseling services to improve student success. Funds may also be used for construction, maintenance, and renovation activities; the purchase or lease of scientific and laboratory equipment; and the establishment of an endowment.

Strengthening Predominately Black Institutions [PBIs].—The Committee recommends \$8,967,000 for the Strengthening PBIs program. This program provides 5-year grants to PBIs to plan and implement programs to enhance the institutions' capacity to serve more low- and middle-income Black American students. In addition to the Committee-recommended level, the HCERA provides \$15,000,000 in mandatory funding in each fiscal year through 2019 to support programs at PBIs in the areas of STEM; health education; internationalization or globalization; teacher preparation; and improving the educational outcomes of African-American males.

Strengthening Asian American and Native American Pacific Islander-Serving Institutions [AANAPISIs].—The Committee recommends \$3,020,000 for competitive grants to AANAPISIs that have an enrollment of undergraduate students that is at least 10 percent Asian American or Native American Pacific Islander students. Grants may be used to improve their capacity to serve Asian American and Native American Pacific Islander students and low-income individuals. In addition to the Committee-recommended level, AANAPISIs will receive \$5,000,000 in mandatory funding through the HCERA in each fiscal year through 2019 to develop faculty; strengthen academic programs; improve institutional management; expand student services; and construct classrooms, libraries, laboratories, and other instructional facilities.

Strengthening Alaska Native and Native Hawaiian-Serving Institutions [ANNHs].—The Committee recommends \$12,448,000 for the Strengthening ANNHs program. In addition to the Committee recommended level, these institutions receive \$15,000,000 in mandatory funding through the HCERA in each fiscal year through 2019.

The purpose of this program is to improve and expand the capacity of institutions serving Alaska Native and Native Hawaiian students and low-income individuals. Funds may be used to plan, develop, and implement activities that encourage faculty and curriculum development; improve administrative management; renovate educational facilities; enhance student services; purchase library and other educational materials; and, provide education or counseling services designed to improve the financial and economic literacy of students or their families.

Strengthening Native American-Serving Non-Tribal Institutions.—The Committee recommends \$3,020,000 for this program, which serves institutions that enroll at least 10 percent Native

American students and at least 50 percent low-income students. In addition to the Committee recommended level, these institutions receive \$5,000,000 in mandatory funding through the HCERA in each fiscal year through 2019 to help institutions plan, develop, and implement activities that encourage faculty and curriculum development; improve administrative management; renovate educational facilities; enhance student services; and purchase library and other educational materials.

Strengthening Tribally Controlled Colleges and Universities.—The Committee recommends \$24,892,000 for this program. Tribal colleges and universities rely on a portion of the funds provided to address developmental needs, including faculty development, curriculum, and student services. In addition to the Committee recommended level, this program receives \$30,000,000 in mandatory funding through the HCERA in each fiscal year through 2019.

International Education and Foreign Language Studies

The bill includes a total of \$46,945,000 for International Education and Foreign Language Studies programs.

Funds are used to increase the number of experts in foreign languages and area or international studies to meet national security needs through visits and study in foreign countries.

Domestic Programs.—The Committee recommends \$43,445,000 for domestic program activities related to international education and foreign language studies under title VI of the HEA. Funds are used to support centers, programs, and fellowships. The Committee urges the Secretary to preserve the program's longstanding focus on activities and institutions that address the Nation's need for a strong training and research capacity in foreign languages and international studies, including increasing the pool of international experts in areas that are essential to national security and economic competitiveness.

Overseas Programs.—The Committee recommends \$3,500,000 for overseas programs authorized under the Mutual Educational and Cultural Exchange Act of 1961, popularly known as the Fulbright-Hays Act. Funding is provided for group, faculty, or doctoral dissertation research abroad as well as special bilateral projects. Grants focus on training American instructors and students to improve foreign language and area studies education in the United States.

Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education

The Committee recommendation does not include funding for the Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education [FIPSE].

First in the World.—The budget request included \$200,000,000, the full amount requested under FIPSE, for First in the World. The Committee recommendation does not include funding for this program and instead focuses funding on preserving funding for Pell grants, the core program funded in this bill aimed at improving college access and affordability. First in the World is a competitive grant program to identify innovative solutions to persistent and wide-spread challenges facing students in completing post-secondary education.

Model Comprehensive Transition and Postsecondary Programs for Students With Intellectual Disabilities

The Committee recommendation includes \$10,384,000 for competitive grants to postsecondary institutions to support model programs that help students with intellectual disabilities transition to and complete college, as authorized by section 767 of the HEA. Funds may be used for student support services; academic enrichment, socialization, or independent living; integrated work experiences; and partnerships with LEAs to support students with intellectual disabilities participating in the model program who are still eligible for special education and related services under the IDEA.

Minority Science and Engineering Improvement

The Committee recommends \$8,971,000 for the Minority Science and Engineering Improvement program. Funds are used to provide discretionary grants to institutions with minority enrollments greater than 50 percent to purchase equipment, develop curricula, and support advanced faculty training. Grants are intended to improve science and engineering education programs and increase the number of minority students in the fields of science, mathematics, and engineering.

Tribally Controlled Postsecondary Career and Technical Institutions

The Committee recommends \$7,705,000 for tribally controlled postsecondary vocational institutions. This program provides grants for the operation and improvement of tribally controlled postsecondary vocational institutions to ensure continued and expanding opportunities for Indian students.

Federal TRIO Programs

The Committee recommends \$839,752,000 for Federal TRIO programs, which provide a variety of services to improve postsecondary education opportunities for low-income individuals and first-generation college students.

Upward Bound offers disadvantaged high school students academic services to develop the skills and motivation needed to pursue and complete a postsecondary education; Student Support Services provides developmental instruction, counseling, summer programs, and grant aid to disadvantaged college students to help them complete their postsecondary education; Talent Search identifies and counsels individuals between ages 11 and 27 regarding opportunities for completing high school and enrolling in postsecondary education; Educational Opportunity Centers provide information and counseling on available financial and academic assistance to low-income adults who are first-generation college students; and the Ronald E. McNair Postbaccalaureate Achievement Program supports research internships, seminars, tutoring, and other activities to encourage disadvantaged college students to enroll in doctoral programs.

Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs

The Committee recommends \$301,639,000 for GEAR UP, which provides grants to States and partnerships of colleges, middle and high schools, and community organizations to assist cohorts or students in middle and high schools serving a high percentage of low-income students. Services provided help students prepare for and pursue a postsecondary education.

The Committee continues bill language allowing the Department to set aside up to 1.5 percent of the total provided for evaluation purposes.

Graduate Assistance in Areas of National Need and Javits Fellowships

The Committee recommends \$20,000,000 to support the Graduate Assistance in Areas of National Need [GAANN] program.

GAANN supports fellowships through 3-year competitive grants to graduate academic departments and programs in scientific and technical fields and other areas of national need as determined by the Secretary. Fellowship recipients must have excellent academic records and high financial need and must be pursuing doctoral degrees or the highest graduate degrees in their academic field. Each fellowship consists of a student stipend to cover living costs and an institutional payment to cover each fellow's tuition and other expenses. Institutions of higher education must match 25 percent of the grant amount.

Teacher Quality Partnership Program

The Committee recommends \$34,000,000 for the Teacher Quality Partnership program. The budget request consolidates activities supported by this program into a proposed new Teacher and Principals Pathways program. The Teacher Quality Partnership Program helps improve the quality of teachers working in high-need schools and early childhood education programs by creating model teacher preparation and residency programs.

Child Care Access Means Parents in Schools

Due to budget constraints, the Committee recommendation does not include funding for the Child Care Access Means Parents in School program. Instead of funding this small targeted child care program, the Committee focuses funding on core early childhood care and education programs at the Department of HHS, including CCDBG and Head Start.

GPRA Data/Higher Education Act Program Evaluation

The Committee recommendation does not include funding for GPRA Data/HEA Program Evaluation. No funding for this program was provided in fiscal year 2015. The budget request included \$30,000,000 in new funding for higher education evaluation activities.

HOWARD UNIVERSITY

Appropriations, 2015	\$221,821,000
Budget estimate, 2016	221,821,000
Committee recommendation	219,500,000

The Committee recommends an appropriation of \$219,500,000 for Howard University. Located in the District of Columbia, Howard offers undergraduate, graduate, and professional degrees through 12 schools and colleges. The university also administers the Howard University Hospital. Federal funds from this account support approximately 38 percent of the university's operating costs. The Committee recommends, within the funds provided, not less than \$3,350,000 for the endowment program.

Howard University Hospital.—Within the funds provided, the Committee recommends \$26,500,000 for Howard University Hospital. The hospital provides inpatient and outpatient care, as well as training in the health professions. It also serves as a major acute and ambulatory care center for the District of Columbia and functions as a major teaching facility attached to the university. The Federal appropriation provides partial funding for the hospital's operations.

COLLEGE HOUSING AND ACADEMIC FACILITIES LOANS PROGRAM

Appropriations, 2015	\$435,000
Budget estimate, 2016	450,000
Committee recommendation	435,000

Federal Administration.—The Committee bill includes \$435,000 for Federal administration of the CHAFL, College Housing Loans, and Higher Education Facilities Loans programs. Prior to fiscal year 1994, these programs provided financing for the construction, reconstruction, and renovation of housing, academic, and other educational facilities. While no new loans have been awarded since fiscal year 1993, costs for administering the outstanding loans will continue through 2030. These funds will be used to reimburse the Department for administrative expenses incurred in managing the existing loan portfolio.

HISTORICALLY BLACK COLLEGE AND UNIVERSITY CAPITAL FINANCING PROGRAM ACCOUNT

Appropriations, 2015	\$19,430,000
Budget estimate, 2016	19,436,000
Committee recommendation	19,430,000

The Committee recommends \$19,430,000 for the HBCU Capital Financing Program.

The Committee recommendation includes \$19,096,000 to pay the loan subsidy costs in guaranteed loan authority under this program. This amount will support an estimated \$286,000,000 in new loan volume in fiscal year 2016. The remaining \$334,000 will be used for administrative expenses.

The HBCU Capital Financing Program makes capital available to HBCUs for construction, renovation, and repair of academic facilities by providing a Federal guarantee for private sector construction bonds. Construction loans will be made from the proceeds of the sale of the bonds.

INSTITUTE FOR EDUCATION SCIENCES

Appropriations, 2015	\$573,935,000
Budget estimate, 2016	675,883,000
Committee recommendation	562,978,000

The Committee recommends \$562,978,000 for the Institute for Education Sciences [IES]. This account supports education research, development, dissemination, and evaluation; data collection and analysis activities; and the assessment of student progress.

Under the Education Sciences Reform Act of 2002, Congress established IES to provide objective and valid research-driven knowledge that was free of political influence or bias so as to better inform effective education practices at the State and local levels. The act required IES, in carrying out its mission, "to compile statistics, develop products, and conduct research, evaluations, and wide dissemination activities in areas of demonstrated national need and ensure that such activities conform to high standards of quality, integrity, and accuracy and are objective, secular, neutral, and non-ideological and are free of partisan political influence."

The Committee directs the Director to submit an operating plan within 90 days of enactment of this act to the Committees on Appropriations of the House of Representatives and the Senate detailing how IES plans to allocate funding available to the Institute for research, evaluation, and other activities authorized under law.

RESEARCH, DEVELOPMENT, AND DISSEMINATION

The Committee recommends \$177,860,000 for education research, development, and national dissemination activities. Funds are available for obligation for 2 fiscal years. These funds support activities that are aimed at expanding fundamental knowledge of education and promoting the use of research and development findings in the design of efforts to improve education.

STATISTICS

The Committee recommends \$102,060,000 for data gathering and statistical analysis activities at the National Center for Education Statistics [NCES].

NCES collects, analyzes, and reports statistics on education in the United States. Activities are carried out directly and through grants and contracts. The Center collects data on educational institutions at all levels, longitudinal data on student progress, and data relevant to public policy. NCES also provides technical assistance to SEAs, LEAs, and postsecondary institutions.

REGIONAL EDUCATIONAL LABORATORIES

The Committee recommends \$53,823,000 to continue support for the Regional Educational Laboratories program. Funds available in this bill will continue to support a network of 10 laboratories. The laboratories are responsible for promoting the use and development of knowledge and evidence in broad-based systemic strategies to increase student learning and further school improvement efforts. The Committee appreciates the efforts of IES to strengthen the connections between practitioners and the research community, so

that federally supported research is timely, relevant, and responsive to the needs of the field.

RESEARCH AND INNOVATION IN SPECIAL EDUCATION

The Committee recommends \$48,000,000 for research and innovation in special education conducted by the National Center for Special Education Research [NCSE].

The Center addresses gaps in scientific knowledge to improve special education and early intervention services and outcomes for infants, toddlers, and children with disabilities. Funds provided to the Center are available for obligation for 2 fiscal years.

SPECIAL EDUCATION STUDIES AND EVALUATIONS

The Committee recommends \$10,500,000 for special education studies and evaluations.

This program supports competitive grants, contracts, and cooperative agreements to assess the implementation of IDEA. Funds are also used to evaluate the effectiveness of State and local efforts to deliver special education services and early intervention programs. Funds are available for obligation for 2 fiscal years.

STATEWIDE DATA SYSTEMS

The Committee recommendation includes \$33,500,000 for the Statewide Data Systems program.

This program supports competitive grants to SEAs to enable such agencies to design, develop, and implement Statewide, longitudinal data systems to manage, analyze, disaggregate, and use individual data for students of all ages. Early childhood, postsecondary, and workforce information systems may be linked to such systems or developed with program funds. The Committee believes the Department should continue its efforts to ensure every State has the base support necessary to develop effective systems. Funds are available for obligation for 2 fiscal years.

ASSESSMENT

The Committee recommends \$137,235,000 to provide support for the National Assessment of Educational Progress [NAEP], a congressionally mandated assessment created to measure and report the educational achievement of American students in a range of subjects and analyze trends over time.

Within the funds appropriated, the Committee recommends \$8,235,000 for the National Assessment Governing Board [NAGB], which is responsible for formulating policy for NAEP.

The Committee is pleased that the NAGB has reinstated assessments for 8th and 12th grade students in United States History, Civics, and Geography. Previous assessments conducted by NAGB indicate that fewer than one in four 4th, 8th, and 12th grade students at all grade levels are proficient in United States History. Due to budget constraints the Committee recommendation includes the same level of funding to support NAEP as in fiscal year 2015. However, the Committee encourages the NAGB to continue administering the assessments in these three areas at least every 4 years, in accordance with the current NAEP schedule. According to

this schedule, the next administration will be in 2018. In addition, the Committee supports NAEP's proposals to move the math and reading assessments to a digital based platform and expand the Trial Urban District Assessments to 10 more urban school districts.

The Committee notes that the NAGB has scheduled the NAEP arts assessment for 2016. The Committee encourages the Department to ensure that the arts assessment is completed on time and that it measures creating, performing, and responding to art in the disciplines of dance, theatre, music, and visual arts.

DEPARTMENTAL MANAGEMENT

PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION

Appropriations, 2015	\$411,000,000
Budget estimate, 2016	474,089,000
Committee recommendation	391,326,000

The Committee recommends \$391,326,000 for program administration. The fiscal year 2015 level represents the enacted level, prior to the transfer of funds and administration of certain programs to ACL in WIOA.

Funds support personnel compensation and benefits, travel, rent, communications, utilities, printing, equipment and supplies, automated data processing, and other services required to award, administer, and monitor Federal education programs. Support for program evaluation and studies and advisory councils is also provided under this account.

The Committee remains concerned that State and local education agencies often submit the exact same data elements to various principal offices within the Department. This duplicative reporting diverts important State and local resources to filling out paperwork rather than to providing direct services to students. Therefore, the Committee directs the Department to review the reporting requirements across principal offices and determine ways to reduce confusion and duplication across offices in order to streamline reporting requirements in accordance with the Paperwork Reduction Act.

Performance Partnerships.—The Committee supports the continuation of the Performance Partnerships for Disconnected Youth. The Performance Partnerships Pilots will allow States and localities to identify better ways of improving outcomes for disconnected youth by giving them additional flexibility in using discretionary funds available through multiple Federal programs. The Committee includes a new provision this year to focus activities towards communities that have recently faced civil unrest. Recent events in communities across the Nation have illustrated, in part, the important need to improve opportunities and services for disconnected populations, and Performance Partnerships focused in these communities will allow localities to pilot better ways of improving outcomes.

The Committee requests the administration provide it with annual reports containing the following information: a detailed summary of all involved pilot programs, an overview of how pilots were selected, a summary of findings from the various pilots, and recommendations for Congress on how to apply best practices more broadly.

The Committee is concerned that the Department took approximately 18 months for its appeal of an administrative law judge's decision that Central Kitsap school district is eligible for payments under the Heavily Impact Aid program in fiscal year 2010. The Committee believes that such delays create avoidable hardship for school districts and the students they serve. The Committee directs the Department to provide a report not later than 30 days after enactment of this act identifying specific steps going forward that the Department will take to prevent any other school district or institution from having to endure such avoidable delays.

OFFICE FOR CIVIL RIGHTS

Appropriations, 2015	\$100,000,000
Budget estimate, 2016	130,691,000
Committee recommendation	100,000,000

The Committee recommends \$100,000,000 for the Office of Civil Rights [OCR].

OCR is responsible for the enforcement of laws that prohibit discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, disability, and age in all programs and institutions that receive financial assistance from the Department. To carry out this responsibility, OCR investigates and resolves discrimination complaints, monitors desegregation and equal educational opportunity plans, reviews possible discriminatory practices by recipients of Federal education funds, and provides technical assistance to recipients of funds to help them meet these civil rights requirements.

OFFICE OF THE INSPECTOR GENERAL

Appropriations, 2015	\$57,791,000
Budget estimate, 2016	59,256,000
Committee recommendation	57,791,000

The Committee recommends \$57,791,000 for OIG.

OIG has the authority to investigate all departmental programs and administrative activities, including those under contract or grant, to prevent and detect fraud and abuse, and to ensure the quality and integrity of those programs. The Office investigates alleged misuse of Federal funds and conducts audits to determine compliance with laws and regulations, efficiency of operations, and effectiveness in achieving program goals.

GENERAL PROVISIONS

Section 301. The bill continues a provision prohibiting the use of funds for the transportation of students or teachers in order to overcome racial imbalance.

Section 302. The bill continues a provision prohibiting the involuntary transportation of students other than to the school nearest to the student's home.

Section 303. The bill continues a provision prohibiting the use of funds to prevent the implementation of programs of voluntary prayer and meditation in public schools.

Section 304. The bill continues a provision giving the Secretary authority to transfer up to 1 percent of any discretionary funds between appropriations.

Section 305. The bill continues a provision that allows the outlying areas to consolidate funds under title V of the ESEA.

Section 306. The bill continues a provision that allows the Republic of Palau to receive certain Federal funds.

Section 307. The bill continues a provision that clarifies the Department's authority to reserve up to 0.5 percent of each ESEA appropriation in the bill for evaluation of ESEA programs funded in this act. These resources are in addition to any funds specifically provided for evaluation purposes.

Section 308. The bill modifies a general provision allowing certain institutions to continue to use endowment income for student scholarships.

Section 309. The bill includes a new general provision rescinding \$300,000,000 in prior year discretionary unobligated balances from the Pell grant program.

Section 310. The bill includes a new general provision prohibiting funding for the development, implementation, and enforcement of several higher education administrative regulations until the HEA is reauthorized.

Section 311. The bill includes a new general provision affirming that the Department cannot mandate or incentivize States, LEAs, or schools to adopt any specific set of standards or assessments.

Section 312. The bill includes a new general provision modifying the changes made in division G of Public Law 113-235 concerning career pathways programs.

TITLE IV

RELATED AGENCIES

COMMITTEE FOR PURCHASE FROM PEOPLE WHO ARE BLIND OR SEVERELY DISABLED

SALARIES AND EXPENSES

Appropriations, 2015	\$5,362,000
Budget estimate, 2016	5,441,000
Committee recommendation	5,362,000

The Committee recommends \$5,362,000 for the Committee for Purchase from People Who Are Blind or Severely Disabled.

The AbilityOne program provides about 47,000 severely disabled Americans with employment opportunities each year. The primary purpose of this program is to increase the employment opportunities for people who are blind or have other severe disabilities and, whenever possible, to prepare them to engage in competitive employment. Encompassing approximately \$3,000,000,000 in contracts, it is the Federal Government's largest employment program for the severely disabled. The Committee is concerned about issues identified by both stakeholders and the Government Accountability Office [GAO] stemming from the limited authority of the Commission to oversee fully the Central Nonprofit Agencies [CNAs], the independent contracted organizations which administer the program. As noted by the GAO, the AbilityOne Commission cannot directly control how CNAs spend funds, set performance goals, compensate their executives, or assess whether they meet the statutory requirement that 75 percent of the involved workforce consist of people with severe disabilities. To enhance the Commission's ability to manage the CNAs more fully, the Committee directs the Commission to implement the recommendations of the GAO in its May 2013 report as expeditiously as possible. The Committee also directs the Commission to report to the Committees on Appropriations of the House of Representatives and the Senate within 120 days of enactment of this act on its progress addressing these concerns and recommendations.

CORPORATION FOR NATIONAL AND COMMUNITY SERVICE

The Corporation for National and Community Service [CNCS], a corporation owned by the Federal Government, was established to enhance opportunities for national and community service. CNCS administers programs authorized under the Domestic Volunteer Service Act, the National and Community Service Trust Act, and the SERVE America Act. Grants are awarded to States, public and private nonprofit organizations, and other entities to create service opportunities for students, out-of-school youth, adults, and seniors.

The Committee recommendation for CNCS provides a total program level of \$844,325,000.

OPERATING EXPENSES

Appropriations, 2015	\$758,349,000
Budget estimate, 2016	855,208,000
Committee recommendation	614,075,000

The Committee recommends \$614,075,000 for the operating expenses of CNCS.

Volunteers in Service to America [VISTA]

The Committee recommends \$90,000,000 for VISTA. This program provides capacity building for small, community-based organizations with a mission of combating poverty. VISTA members raise resources, recruit and organize volunteers, and establish and expand programs in housing, employment, health, and economic development activities.

National Senior Volunteer Corps

The Committee recommends \$196,637,000 for the National Senior Volunteer Corps programs, a collection of programs that connect Americans older than the age of 55 with opportunities to contribute their job skills and expertise to community projects and organizations. These programs include the Retired Senior Volunteer Program [RSVP], the Foster Grandparent Program, and the Senior Companion Program.

AmeriCorps State and National Grants

The Committee recommends \$270,000,000 for AmeriCorps State and National Grants, which provide funds to local and national organizations and agencies to address community needs in education, public safety, health, and the environment. Each of these organizations and agencies, in turn, uses its AmeriCorps funding to recruit, place, and supervise AmeriCorps members. AmeriCorps members receive a modest living allowance and other benefits proportional to their level of time commitment.

The Committee strongly encourages CNCS to provide AmeriCorps grants to support communities that have recently experienced civil unrest. AmeriCorps programs are uniquely situated to respond to such sudden crises that have impacted communities across the country but also the challenges underlying them. The Committee strongly supports activities focused in this area.

National Civilian Community Corps [NCCC]

The Committee recommendation includes \$30,000,000 for NCCC, a full-time, team-based residential program for men and women ages 18 to 24. Members are assigned to one of five campuses for a 10-month service commitment.

Innovation, Demonstration, and Assistance Activities

The Committee recommendation includes \$7,400,000 for innovation, demonstration, and assistance activities.

Social Innovation Fund [SIF].—Due to budget constraints the Committee recommendation does not include funding for the Social Innovation Fund.

Volunteer Generation Fund.—Within the total, the Committee recommendation includes \$3,800,000 for the Volunteer Generation Fund authorized under section 198P of the SERVE America Act, the same as the comparable fiscal year 2015 funding level.

Evaluation

The Committee recommendation includes \$4,000,000 for CNCS evaluation activities.

State Commission Grants

The Committee recommendation includes \$16,038,000 for State Commission Grants.

The Committee strongly encourages CNCS to improve coordination with State commissions as part of CNCS' grant making process, including in announcing the availability and awarding of funds under AmeriCorps. State Commissions are a vital local resource and primary point of entry for national and community service at the local level. Improving coordination between CNCS and local State commissions would improve the administration of service programs at the local level and promote innovation by supporting the organizations that know their communities best.

PAYMENT TO THE NATIONAL SERVICE TRUST

Appropriations, 2015	\$209,618,000
Budget estimate, 2016	237,077,000
Committee recommendation	145,000,000

The Committee recommends an appropriation of \$145,000,000 for making payments to the National Service Trust.

The National Service Trust makes payments of Segal education awards, pays interest that accrues on qualified student loans for AmeriCorps participants during terms of service in approved national service positions, and makes other payments entitled to members who serve in the programs of CNCS.

SALARIES AND EXPENSES

Appropriations, 2015	\$81,737,000
Budget estimate, 2016	86,176,000
Committee recommendation	80,000,000

The Committee recommends an appropriation of \$80,000,000 for CNCS salaries and expenses. The salaries and expenses appropriation provides funds for staff salaries, benefits, travel, training, rent, equipment, and other operating expenses necessary for management of CNCS programs and activities.

OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL

Appropriations, 2015	\$5,250,000
Budget estimate, 2016	6,000,000
Committee recommendation	5,250,000

The Committee recommends an appropriation of \$5,250,000 for the CNCS OIG. The OIG's goals are to increase organizational efficiency and effectiveness within the Corporation and to prevent fraud, waste, and abuse.

ADMINISTRATIVE PROVISIONS

The Committee retains language from the fiscal year 2015 appropriations act concerning five administrative provisions: requiring the Corporation to make any significant changes to program requirements or policy through rule making (section 401); stipulating

minimum share requirements (section 402); requiring that donations supplement and not supplant operations (section 403); aligning requirements regarding the use of Education Awards at GI bill-eligible institutions (section 404); and allowing the required background check of certain applicants to be processed by States under terms of the National Child Protection Act (section 405).

CORPORATION FOR PUBLIC BROADCASTING

Appropriations, 2017	\$445,000,000
Budget estimate, 2018	445,000,000
Committee recommendation, 2018	445,000,000

The Committee recommends \$445,000,000 for Corporation for Public Broadcasting [CPB] as an advance appropriation for fiscal year 2018.

The majority of these funds go directly to local public television and radio stations to support their programming. CPB funds also support the creation of content for radio, television, and other platforms; system support activities that benefit the entire public broadcasting community; and CPB's administrative costs.

The Committee has not provided the additional \$40,000,000 in fiscal year 2016 requested for the first phase of replacing and upgrading the public television interconnection system due to budget constraints. However, language in the bill provides authority to the CPB, at its discretion, to obligate up to \$40,000,000 of fiscal year 2016 funds for this purpose notwithstanding the statutory formula distribution. The CPB may utilize the amount up to \$40,000,000 only for the purpose of beginning the interconnection project in fiscal year 2016 as requested.

FEDERAL MEDIATION AND CONCILIATION SERVICE

SALARIES AND EXPENSES

Appropriations, 2015	\$45,666,000
Budget estimate, 2016	48,748,000
Committee recommendation	47,823,000

The Committee recommends \$47,823,000 for the Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service [FMCS]. FMCS provides mediation, conciliation, and arbitration services to labor and management organizations to prevent and minimize work stoppages and promote stable labor-management relationships. FMCS is also authorized to provide dispute resolution consultation and training to all Federal agencies.

Within the total, FMCS may utilize up to \$400,000 for labor-management partnership grants. These grants support innovative approaches to collaborative labor-management relationships to resolve potential problems, explore ways to improve productivity, and avert serious work stoppages.

The Committee recognizes the FMCS must incur costs associated with relocating its offices in fiscal year 2016. The Committee provides an increase to FMCS to address this need to reduce the amount which must come from within the Service's base funds for relocation costs.

FEDERAL MINE SAFETY AND HEALTH REVIEW COMMISSION
SALARIES AND EXPENSES

Appropriations, 2015	\$16,751,000
Budget estimate, 2016	17,085,000
Committee recommendation	15,950,000

The Committee recommends \$15,950,000 for the Federal Mine Safety and Health Review Commission [FMSHRC], which provides administrative trial and appellate review of legal disputes under the Federal Mine Safety and Health Act of 1977. Most cases involve civil penalties proposed by MSHA. FMSHRC's administrative law judges [ALJs] decide cases at the trial level and the five-member Commission provides review of the ALJ's decisions.

INSTITUTE OF MUSEUM AND LIBRARY SERVICES

OFFICE OF MUSEUM AND LIBRARIES: GRANTS AND ADMINISTRATION

Appropriations, 2015	\$227,860,000
Budget estimate, 2016	237,428,000
Committee recommendation	227,860,000

The Committee recommends \$227,860,000 for the Institute of Museum and Library Services [IMLS]. This agency supports programs for museums and libraries that encourage innovation, provide lifelong learning opportunities, promote cultural and civic engagement, and improve access to a variety of services and information.

Within the total for IMLS, the Committee recommendation includes the amounts below:

[In thousands of dollars]

Budget activity	Fiscal year 2015 appropriation	Fiscal year 2016 request	Committee recommendation
Library Services Technology Act:			
Grants to States	154,848	154,500	154,848
Native American Library Services	3,861	4,063	3,861
National Leadership: Libraries	12,200	17,500	13,092
Laura Bush 21st Century Librarian	10,000	10,500	10,000
Subtotal, LSTA	180,909	186,563	181,801
Museum Services Act:			
Museums for America	20,200	21,457	20,200
Native American/Hawaiian Museum Services	924	972	924
National Leadership: Museums	7,600	11,168	7,741
Subtotal, MSA	28,724	33,597	28,865
African American History and Culture Act	1,407	1,481	1,407
Administration	15,000	14,000	14,000
Policy, Research, Program Evaluation, and Statistics	1,820	1,787	1,787

MEDICAID AND CHIP PAYMENT AND ACCESS COMMISSION
SALARIES AND EXPENSES

Appropriations, 2015	\$7,650,000
Budget estimate, 2016	8,700,000
Committee recommendation	7,250,000

The Committee recommends \$7,250,000 for the Medicaid and CHIP Payment and Access Commission [MACPAC]. This commission was established in the Children’s Health Insurance Program Reauthorization Act of 2009 and is tasked with reviewing State and Federal Medicaid and Children’s Health Insurance Program access and payment policies and making recommendations to Congress, the Secretary of HHS, and the States on a wide range of issues affecting those programs. The Committee recommendation will allow MACPAC to continue to carry out these activities.

MEDICARE PAYMENT ADVISORY COMMISSION

SALARIES AND EXPENSES

Appropriations, 2015	\$11,749,000
Budget estimate, 2016	12,100,000
Committee recommendation	11,100,000

The Committee recommends \$11,100,000 for the Medicare Payment Advisory Commission [MedPAC], which provides independent policy and technical advice on issues affecting the Medicare program.

NATIONAL COUNCIL ON DISABILITY

SALARIES AND EXPENSES

Appropriations, 2015	\$3,250,000
Budget estimate, 2016	3,432,000
Committee recommendation	3,075,000

The Committee recommends \$3,075,000 for the National Council on Disability [NCD]. NCD is mandated to make recommendations to the President, Congress, the Rehabilitation Services Administration, and the National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research on issues of concern to individuals with disabilities. The Council gathers information on the implementation, effectiveness, and impact of the Americans with Disabilities Act and examines emerging policy issues as they affect persons with disabilities and their ability to enter or re-enter the Nation’s workforce and to live independently.

NATIONAL LABOR RELATIONS BOARD

SALARIES AND EXPENSES

Appropriations, 2015	\$274,224,000
Budget estimate, 2016	278,000,000
Committee recommendation	246,802,000

The Committee recommends \$246,802,000 for the National Labor Relations Board [NLRB], which administers and enforces the National Labor Relations Act and protects employee and employer rights provided under that act.

The Committee is deeply concerned by the Board’s aggressive regulatory agenda as well as its departure from long-standing policy and precedent on a variety of matters. The Committee has included new provisions in the bill and reduced the Board’s budget authority to constrain its unacceptable overreach.

The Committee notes that the Board's fiscal year 2016 CJ contains insufficient detail about its workload, performance, and administrative plans and priorities. The submission contains far less information to support the request than in past years. The Board is directed to provide justification for its fiscal year 2017 request, including at least as much detail as it has traditionally provided prior to fiscal year 2016.

The Committee is concerned that the NLRB has sought in some cases to exercise jurisdiction over Indian-owned businesses within tribal territories. Under the National Labor Relations Act of 1935 [NLRA], Federal, State, and local governments are exempted explicitly from the NLRB's jurisdiction. In the recent Chickasaw Nation case, the NLRB recognized tribal sovereignty for purposes of the NLRA for tribes with formal treaties. The Committee believes that Indian governments without formal treaties should be treated no differently with respect to the jurisdiction of the NLRB.

ADMINISTRATIVE PROVISIONS

The Committee maintains language from the fiscal year 2015 appropriations act concerning one administrative provision restricting the use of electronic voting (section 406) and includes three new provisions: prohibiting enforcement of a new representation case procedure rule (section 407); prohibiting any change in the interpretation or application of a standard to determine whether entities are "joint employers" (section 408); and prohibiting any form of implementation of a new standard for initial bargaining unit determinations that conflicts with the standard articulated in the majority opinion in Wheeling Island Gaming Inc. and United Food and Commercial Workers International Union, Local 23 (section 409).

NATIONAL MEDIATION BOARD

SALARIES AND EXPENSES

Appropriations, 2015	\$13,227,000
Budget estimate, 2016	13,230,000
Committee recommendation	12,600,000

The Committee recommends \$12,600,000 for the National Mediation Board [NMB], which mediates labor-management relations in the railroad and airline industries under the Railway Labor Act. The NMB mediates collective bargaining disputes, conducts elections to determine the choice of employee bargaining representatives, and administers arbitration of employee grievances.

OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY AND HEALTH REVIEW COMMISSION

SALARIES AND EXPENSES

Appropriations, 2015	\$11,639,000
Budget estimate, 2016	13,212,000
Committee recommendation	11,100,000

The Committee recommends \$11,100,000 for the Occupational Safety and Health Review Commission [OSHRC]. OSHRC serves as a court to resolve disputes between OSHA and employers charged with violations of health and safety standards enforced by OSHA.

RAILROAD RETIREMENT BOARD

The Railroad Retirement Board [RRB] administers the retirement/survivor and unemployment/sickness insurance benefit programs for railroad workers and their families under the Railroad Retirement Act and Railroad Unemployment Insurance Act.

DUAL BENEFITS PAYMENTS ACCOUNT

Appropriations, 2015	\$34,000,000
Budget estimate, 2016	29,000,000
Committee recommendation	29,000,000

The Committee recommends \$29,000,000 for the Dual Benefits Payments Account. This amount includes an estimated \$2,000,000 derived from income taxes on vested dual benefits. This appropriation provides for vested dual benefit payments to beneficiaries covered under both the railroad retirement and Social Security systems.

FEDERAL PAYMENTS TO THE RAILROAD RETIREMENT ACCOUNT

Appropriations, 2015	\$150,000
Budget estimate, 2016	150,000
Committee recommendation	150,000

The Committee recommends \$150,000 for Federal Payments to the Railroad Retirement Account. These funds reimburse the railroad retirement trust funds for interest earned on non-negotiated checks.

LIMITATION ON ADMINISTRATION

Appropriations, 2015	\$111,225,000
Budget estimate, 2016	119,918,000
Committee recommendation	111,225,000

The Committee recommends \$111,225,000 for RRB's costs associated with the administration of railroad retirement/survivor and unemployment/sickness benefit programs. This account limits the amount of funds in the railroad retirement and railroad unemployment insurance trust funds that may be used by the Board for administrative expenses.

The Committee maintains bill language giving RRB the authority to hire new attorneys in the excepted service.

LIMITATION ON THE OFFICE OF THE INSPECTOR GENERAL

Appropriations, 2015	\$8,437,000
Budget estimate, 2016	9,450,000
Committee recommendation	8,437,000

The Committee recommends \$8,437,000 for the RRB OIG. This Office conducts audits and investigations to protect the integrity of the RRB trust funds and provides comprehensive oversight of all RRB operations and programs.

SOCIAL SECURITY ADMINISTRATION

PAYMENTS TO SOCIAL SECURITY TRUST FUNDS

Appropriations, 2015	\$16,400,000
Budget estimate, 2016	20,400,000
Committee recommendation	20,400,000

The Committee recommends \$20,400,000 in mandatory funds for payments to Social Security trust funds. This account reimburses the Old Age and Survivors Insurance [OASI] and Disability Insurance [DI] trust funds for special payments to certain uninsured persons, costs incurred administering pension reform activities, and the value of the interest for benefit checks issued but not negotiated. This appropriation restores the trust funds to the same financial position they would have been in had they not borne these costs and they were properly charged to general revenues.

SUPPLEMENTAL SECURITY INCOME PROGRAM

Appropriations, 2015	\$41,232,978,000
Budget estimate, 2016	46,422,000,000
Committee recommendation	46,110,777,000

The Committee recommends \$46,110,777,000 in fiscal year 2016 mandatory funds for the SSI program. This is in addition to the \$19,200,000,000 provided in the fiscal year 2015 appropriations act for the first quarter of fiscal year 2016. In addition, the Committee recommends \$14,500,000,000 in advance funding for the first quarter of fiscal year 2017. Due to the timing of benefit payments, which are made on the first of the month unless the first falls on a weekend or Federal holiday in which case it's made on the previous business day, there will be 13 monthly benefit payments in fiscal year 2016, compared to 12 in fiscal year 2015. The SSI program guarantees a minimum level of income to individuals who are disabled, blind, or older than age 65, and meet certain income and resource limitations.

Federal Benefit Payments

The Committee recommendation includes a fiscal year 2016 program level of \$60,683,000,000 for Federal benefit payments. This will support an average monthly benefit of approximately \$565 for 8.2 million recipients.

Beneficiary Services

The Committee recommendation includes \$70,000,000 in new mandatory budget authority for beneficiary services. Including carryover of prior year unobligated balances this will fund a total estimated fiscal year 2016 program level of \$86,000,000.

These funds reimburse VR agencies for successfully rehabilitating disabled SSI recipients by helping them achieve and sustain productive, self-supporting work activity. Funds also support the Ticket to Work program that provides SSI recipients with a ticket to offer employment networks [ENs], including VR agencies, in exchange for employment and support services. Instead of reimbursing ENs for specific services, the Ticket to Work program pays ENs based on recipients achieving certain milestones and outcomes.

Research and Demonstration

The Committee recommendation includes \$101,000,000 in mandatory funds for research and demonstration projects conducted under sections 1110, 1115, and 1144 of the Social Security Act. These funds support a variety of research and demonstration projects designed to improve the disability process, promote self-sufficiency and assist individuals in returning to work, encourage savings and retirement planning through financial literacy, and generally provide analytical and data resources for use in preparing and reviewing policy proposals.

Administrative Expenses

The Committee recommendation includes \$4,453,777,000 for SSI program administrative expenses. This appropriation funds the SSI program's share of administrative expenses incurred through the Limitation on Administrative Expenses [LAE] account.

LIMITATION ON ADMINISTRATIVE EXPENSES

Appropriations, 2015	\$11,805,945,000
Budget estimate, 2016	12,512,000,000
Committee recommendation	11,620,945,000

The Committee recommends \$11,620,945,000 for SSA's LAE account. This account provides resources for SSA to administer the OASI, DI, and SSI programs, and to support CMS in administering the Medicare program. The LAE account is funded by the Social Security and Medicare trust funds for their share of administrative expenses, the general fund for the SSI program's share of administrative expenses, and applicable user fees. These funds support core administrative activities including processing retirement and disability claims, conducting hearings to review disability determination appeals, issuing Social Security numbers and cards, processing individuals' annual earnings information, and ensuring the integrity of Social Security programs through continuing disability reviews [CDR] and SSI redeterminations of non-medical eligibility.

Continuing Disability Reviews and SSI Redeterminations.—The Committee recommendation includes \$1,439,000,000 for CDRs and SSI redeterminations of non-medical eligibility. This includes \$273,000,000 in base funding and \$1,166,000,000 in cap adjustment funding allowed under the Budget Control Act [BCA] of 2011. The Committee recommendation is a \$43,000,000 increase over the fiscal year 2015 funding level, as specified in the BCA. Combined these activities are estimated to save approximately \$10,000,000,000 for the Social Security, Medicare, and Medicaid programs by preventing waste, fraud, abuse, and improper payments.

Work Incentives Planning and Assistance [WIPA] and Protection and Advocacy for Beneficiaries of Social Security [PABSS].—The Committee recommendation includes \$23,000,000 for WIPA and \$7,000,000 for PABSS, the same as the comparable fiscal year 2015 levels respectively. These programs provide valuable services to help Social Security disability beneficiaries return to work.

Representative Payee Oversight.—SSA assigns representative payees when beneficiaries are unable to financially manage their