

NAEVR Scorecard ISSUES

Congress Fails to Override Presidential Veto of FY2008 LHHS Conference Bill

On November 15, just before Congress adjourned for the Thanksgiving recess, the House failed to override the President's veto of the Fiscal Year (FY) 2008 Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education (LHHS) appropriations conference bill (H.R. 3043) by a vote of 277-141. A total of 51 Republicans voted with 226 Democrats for the override, while 141 Republicans voted to sustain the veto—many of whom are members of the conservative Republican Study Committee that vowed to sustain vetoes of bills that exceeded the President's budget request. Congress will return on December 3 for a planned two-week session that may include action on an omnibus spending bill (including LHHS) which could split the \$22 billion difference between the spending bills and the President's request, as the current Continuing Resolution funding the government expires on December 14. As of the recess, only the Defense appropriations bill had been passed and signed (see separate story).

NIH's Dr. Zerhouni Expands Research Value Message at PhRMA/RIA Meeting

At a November 16 meeting entitled *Transforming Health: Fulfilling the Promise of Research* sponsored by the Pharmaceutical Research and Manufacturers of America (PhRMA) and Research!America (RIA), NIH Director Dr. Zerhouni added new themes to his research value message. In addition to noting the importance of *P4 Medicine* (i.e., prediction, preemption, personalized, and participatory research) in managing the disease cycle, he emphasized the need to study the "software" of life (e.g., cellular mechanisms, signaling) in addition to the "hardware". While recognizing the discovery of gene variants associated with age-related macular degeneration (AMD) in 2005 as a major breakthrough from the *Human Genome*

On November 1, NAEVR had commended the House and Senate LHHS conferees who increased NIH funding by \$100 million over that in the Senate bill (see funding chart), which reflects a 3.8 percent increase over FY2007 (prior to transfers, such as Global HIV/AIDS funding) and represents the first time in five years that an NIH increase matched inflation. The conference agreement funded the NEI at \$684.1 million, an increase of \$17 million or 2.5 percent over FY2007.

"Regardless of the ultimate outcome, the advocacy community should be proud that its message about the value of medical research was heard by Congress," said NAEVR's James Jorkasky, who added that the vision community sent thousands of email letters, made Capitol Hill visits, and joined with coalition partners in letters and ads urging appropriate increases.

Project, he presented a slide listing dozens of new gene discoveries that have occurred in 2007, demonstrating NIH's accelerated knowledge about the basis of disease.

Although Dr. Zerhouni avoided comment on the previous evening's failed House override of the Presidential veto of the FY2008 LHHS conference bill, PhRMA President and CEO Billy Tauzin, a former Republican House member from Louisiana and a cancer survivor, did remark. "Don't misinterpret the vote, as it is just politics," he said, stating that there is a lot of support for the NIH in Congress. "Researchers in the district need to make the connection between NIH funding and the extramural research

	FY 2007 Final	FY 2008 Budget	FY 2008 House	FY 2008 Senate	Conference Bill
NIH*	\$28.9 B	\$28.6 B -1.7%	\$29.6 B +2.6%	\$29.9 B +3.5%	\$30 B +3.8%
NEI+	\$667.1 M	\$667.8 M +0.1%	\$677 M +1.5%	\$681.9 M +2.2%	\$684.1 M +2.5%

* Program level, inclusive of transfers/one time expenses.
+ FY07 NEI excludes \$8.5 M for NEI programs due to direct appropriation to NIH common fund and \$4.2 M in NIH Director Bridge Awards.



At the October 24-27 American Academy of Optometry meeting in Tampa, children's vision researcher James Hoekel, O.D., contacted his Missouri Senators at NAEVR's booth. The office of freshman Senator Claire McCaskill (D-MO) responded immediately, noting the Senator's support for the maximum possible increase in NIH funding.



Paul Rogers (Research!America), Karl Moeller (Campaign for Public Health, CPH), and CPH Board member Jennifer Luray (Abbott Laboratories) present Senate LHHS Appropriations Subcommittee Chair Tom Harkin (D-IA) an ad sponsored by the advocacy community, including NAEVR, that ran in several Hill dailies and supported the LHHS conference agreement.

being conducted at the institutions in the district, as well as the new diagnostics and treatments that are emerging for constituents."



Dr. Zerhouni (left) and Billy Tauzin