

There are at least two schools of thought about the proper international role for NSF. One stresses the benefits of cooperation, the need for openness in the exchange of information, and the need to coordinate scientific and political aims more closely. The other, more competitive-minded approach seeks to downplay political involvement and to emphasize the need for the United States to be preeminent in every important area of research.

At the hearings, there was much discussion about whether the United States needed to be "number one" in everything. The prevailing feeling seemed to be that while this was the case after World War II, it is not realistic to suppose that eternal dominance is in order. William Nierenberg of Scripps Institute, chairman of the National Science Board Committee on International Science, stated in a memo to the committee that "it would be futile to assume as a matter

of national policy the unattainable (and counterproductive) goal of achieving a number one position for the U.S. in all significant fields of research, or even in most fields." Weisskopf observed that "it is an issue of scientific responsibility versus scientific greed. . . . We certainly will lose the support that we have received in the past if it appears that different parts of the world community are trying to outpace each other. . . ."

—CONSTANCE HOLDEN

NIH Bills Moving Through Congress

Congressional action on legislation for the National Institutes of Health (NIH) moved a step closer to enactment recently in both Houses. On 17 June, the House passed a bill (HR 2409) introduced by California Democrat Henry A. Waxman (*Science*, 29 March, p. 1562). On the same day, Senator Orrin G. Hatch (R-Utah) introduced a counterpart bill (S 1309) in the Senate where passage is expected, although the schedule is uncertain.

The two bills are quite similar, although there are important differences that will have to be worked out in House-Senate conference before a final version can be voted on by both houses of Congress. Congress has been trying to agree on reauthorizing legislation for NIH for 5 years now. Last year, after much negotiating, the House and Senate finally did pass a bill (S 540), only to see it vetoed by President Reagan on grounds that it was too costly and injected too much congressional "micromanagement" into NIH's affairs (*Science*, 16 November 1984, p. 811).

This year, an issue that has absorbed the biomedical research community has been the number of new and competing grants NIH will be able to fund in the next 2 or 3 years (*Science*, 5 April, p. 35). Both the Waxman and Hatch versions of the NIH bill authorize sufficient funds to pay for 6000 grants a year.

Both versions of the legislation extend the authority of the National Cancer Institute and the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute—the only NIH institutes that require periodic reauthorization by Congress. In keeping with Waxman's efforts to keep a tight reign on NIH, the House's reauthorization is for only 1 year; the Senate bill would reauthorize the two institutes for 3 years.

In line with the new emphasis on the importance of disease prevention, both bills call for appointment of an associate director for prevention in the NIH director's office and in certain of the institutes. Both bills would create a permanent congressionally appointed ethics board, organizationally not unlike the present Office of Technology Assessment. The board would establish a committee of scientists and others to study issues including developments in human genetics and other sensitive topics.

In addition, both bills would establish a new National Institute of Arthritis, Musculoskeletal, and Skin Diseases. NIH officials have long opposed creation of any new institutes but seem resigned to the fact that Congress will not back down on this one. A proposal to establish a second new institute is less certain to prevail. The Waxman bill contains a provision for a new National Institute of

Nursing, a special project of Representative Edward R. Madigan (R-Ill.). The Senate bill does not contain a similar provision.

In fact, Hatch opposes creation of a nursing institute and spoke to this hotly contested issue when he introduced his bill on the Senate floor. Saying that he shares Madigan's desire to give qualified nursing researchers more "visibility," he also said, ". . . I am concerned that the proposal for a new institute is premature and that possible funding may not be sufficient to accomplish the stated goals." Hatch noted that he has been working with nursing representatives and the Administration (which also opposes a nursing institute) to develop a proposal to "place nursing research in the mainstream of scientific investigation" short of giving them an institute of their own. For example, nurses might be given positions on NIH councils and study sections. No specific legislative action has been put forward in the Senate as yet.

The House and Senate bills contain provisions about the humane treatment of animals in research that are generally in line with current NIH guidelines. Both bills also contain provisions governing notification of NIH officials by institutions that find themselves having to investigate allegations of research fraud.

Language in both bills about research on human fetuses would extend the current ban on most studies for at least another 3 years, while the new ethics committee conducts one more study of the issue. In a statement on the House floor, Waxman made plain his opinion that continuing the moratorium on fetal research may be politically necessary but is scientifically unwise. "I believe that the Congress' heavy-handed intrusion into this area is not just dangerous and unnecessary, but also a precedent that we should carefully avoid in all future legislation to fund research. . . . To tell scientists to turn away from their studies in this instance is not far removed from censorship," said Waxman.

It is probable that House-Senate differences in the two bills will be successfully negotiated in conference, just as they were last year. It is also likely that the President will veto the bill, just as he did last year. Speaking on the House floor in support of the Waxman bill, Representative Doug Walgren (D-Pa.) said, "It is my understanding that the Office of Management and Budget will recommend that the President veto this bill." If Reagan does so, there is a reasonable chance that this time his veto will be overridden.—BARBARA J. CULLITON