

U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

May 23, 2025

The Honorable Robert Aderholt
Chair

Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor, Health
and Human Services, Education and Related
Agencies
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro
Ranking Member

Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor, Health
and Human Services, Education and Related
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Dear Chair Aderholt and Ranking Member DeLauro,

As your subcommittee negotiates the Fiscal Year 2026 House Labor, Health and Human Services and Education Appropriations bill, we respectfully request the inclusion of report language regarding population research activities supported by the Eunice Kennedy Shriver National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD) and National Institute on Aging (NIA) at the National Institutes of Health.

NICHD

As you know, as part of its authorizing statute, NICHD supports a robust population research portfolio that includes longitudinal surveys, research centers and networks, training programs, and grant mechanisms. Over the decades, these investments have yielded numerous scientific advances regarding the causes and consequences of population change, human and child development, early childhood investments, maternal health, and the health and wellbeing of individuals across the life course.

In the last year, NICHD support for large-scale longitudinal survey research has been diminishing. Awards for some surveys have been unexpectedly cut almost in half, forcing scientists to eliminate study components and critical data collection activities, resulting in a permanent loss of nationally representative data sources that are critical for assessing and tracking education, health, and wellbeing outcomes in infants, children, and adolescents. Some of the affected surveys include the Panel Study of Income Dynamics (PSID) Child Development Supplement and the Future of Families and Child Wellbeing Study. These longstanding surveys are public goods whose accessible data are made freely available to scientists nationwide, including those at underserved institutions and new and emerging scholars. As an illustration, the PSID has over 42,000 registered users, representing every state except Wyoming, and the Future of Families and Child Wellbeing Study has almost 9,000 users nationwide. The data are used so extensively that there is one peer reviewed publication per day that uses these data—a testament to how highly valued and widely utilized these survey data are to scientists across numerous disciplines. Support for these surveys makes good economic sense as well given the number of

scientists who can use the data to not only conduct their own analyses, but also to train the next generation.

To raise awareness about the scientific implications of these cuts and to encourage NICHD to reprioritize support for their large-scale longitudinal surveys, we ask that the following language be inserted in the report accompanying the FY 2026 House Labor, Health and Human Services and Education Appropriations bill.

Population Dynamics—The Committee praises NICHD for supporting a strong population dynamics research portfolio that includes the Population Dynamics Centers Research Infrastructure Program and prospective, population representative studies, such as the Panel Study of Income Dynamics Child Development Supplement and Future of Families and Child Wellbeing Study. This infrastructure has been particularly important to advancing the careers of early-stage investigators. The studies alone have over 51,000 registered users nationwide, including thousands of new and emerging scientists. Further, these studies have generated significant scientific findings regarding, for example, the impact of adverse childhood experiences over the life course, how family structure influences health and achievement outcomes in infants, children, and adolescents, and the effects of electronic media use and video games on academic outcomes. The Committee is concerned that support for these efforts may be diminished by plans the Institute has to pause the funding mechanism that supports large grants, including large-scale longitudinal surveys. The Committee asks the Institute to provide details regarding its immediate and long-term plans for supporting large grants within 60 days of the bill's enactment.

NIA

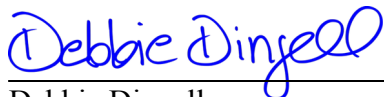
Since its inception in 1974, NIA has maintained a substantial population aging research portfolio that, like NICHD, has supported longitudinal studies, research centers and networks, training programs, and grant mechanisms. Unlike NICHD, NIA has not curtailed its support of large longitudinal surveys, such as the Health and Retirement Study and National Health and Aging Trends Study. In recognition of NIA's consistent support and to help secure its commitment to this essential data infrastructure, we ask the Subcommittee to include the below proposed language in the report accompanying the FY 2026 House Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education Appropriations bill.

Population Aging-- The Committee commends NIA for supporting a robust population aging research portfolio that includes research grants, centers, networks, training programs, and population representative surveys. This portfolio is producing vital research on how demographic, social, and economic factors impact the health and well-being of older people. We commend NIA for its long-term commitment to population representative studies, such as the Health and Retirement Study Family of Surveys, the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent to Adult Health, and the National Health and Aging Trends Study. Together, these studies have over 28,000 registered users—many of whom are early-stage investigators. The publicly accessible data from these studies are not only being accessed to train emerging scientists entering the field, but are also being used extensively by mid-and senior-level investigators to inform scientific findings on topics such as mortality, physical and cognitive functioning,

disability, caregiving, and Alzheimer's disease. Recognizing both the studies' economies of scale and scientific productivity, the Committee urges NIA to sustain its support for these studies and to report within 60 days of the bill's enactment on its plans for maintaining these critical resources.

Thank you for your attention to this important request.

Sincerely,



Debbie Dingell
Member of Congress



Paul Tonko
Member of Congress