

FOCUS

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Prospects for Math/Science Education Bills Now Uncertain

HOPEs for passage of Senate Bill S.1285, "Education for Economic Security Act," which seemed almost certain last summer, are now considerably dimmed. This bill, reported out of committee last May, calls for a total of \$425 million in FY 1984 and \$540 million in FY 1985 for programs in science and mathematics education at both the National Science Foundation (NSF) and the Department of Education (DOEd). The fact that the Senate failed to bring this bill to the floor before adjourning for its winter recess has raised doubts among knowledgeable observers about its eventual passage.

One of the factors in the delay has been the announced intent of some Senators to tack on amendments adding school desegregation funds and a tuition tax credit provision to the bill. This has made the Senate leadership hesitant about bringing the bill to the floor knowing that debate would be both heated and time-consuming. Fortunately, there are some indications that this problem may now be resolved and that the bill will be brought to the Senate floor early in the next session. If this occurs, the 1984 elections will undoubtedly play a significant role in the outcome; however, whether they will increase or decrease the chances of its passage is by no means clear.

It should be noted that many of the NSF precollege activities now underway resemble some of what is called for in S.1285 and in the House version, H.R.1310, which was passed by the House on March 2. (See "NSF Announces 1984 Pre-college Mathematics and Science Activities" on page 2 of this issue.) Although many Senators still strongly favor higher funding levels for NSF, the chief interest for some is not in NSF, but in the large amounts of money slated for DOEd programs.

Even if S.1285 passes in the next session of Congress, the differences between it and H.R.1310 are so great that resolution of these differences in conference is likely to be extremely difficult and the outcome uncertain. A final bill, passed by the House and the Senate and signed by the President, would provide authorization—not appropriations—to NSF and DOEd. Separate action would still be required for the funds to be actually appropriated to these agencies.

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Conference Sets New Goals for Mathematical Sciences Education

A prestigious group of representatives from the major mathematical sciences societies in the United States gathered for two days last November at Airlie House, a conference center just outside of Washington, D.C., to discuss what the community of mathematical sciences professionals should be doing about a wide range of problems in mathematical sciences education, kindergarten through college.

The impetus for the conference came from the flood of recent reports from national commissions, state task forces, and other groups documenting our nation's failure to provide sufficient numbers of its young people with a quality education in mathematics and science. These reports present a clear challenge to the mathematical sciences community—including its professional societies—to set up specific, realizable goals for improving mathematical sciences education at all levels and, working in partnership with schools and teachers, to begin taking the steps necessary to achieve these goals.

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Sixty-Seventh Annual MAA Meeting

The Sixty-Seventh Annual MAA Meeting will be held in Louisville, Kentucky, on January 26-28, 1984, at the Commonwealth Convention Center and the Hyatt Regency Louisville. The meeting program will feature eight minicourses, Richard D. Anderson's Retiring Presidential Address, seven fifty-minute invited addresses, a National Meeting of Department Chairmen, and various panel discussions and other sessions.

Complete program information appeared in the November-December issue of *FOCUS*. Although the preregistration deadline has now passed, anyone who wishes to attend the meeting may register at the Joint Mathematics Meetings Registration Desk in the Main Lobby of the Commonwealth Convention Center, Tuesday, January 24, 4:00 p.m.-8:00 p.m., Wednesday, January 25, 8:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m., or Thursday, January 26 through Saturday, January 28, 8:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m.

The meeting will be held in conjunction with the meetings of the American Mathematical Society, January 25-29 and the Association for Women in Mathematics, January 26-27.