

Congressional Commissions: Funding and Expenditures

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Congressional commissions have been established for a variety of purposes, and can help serve a critical role by informing Congress, providing expert advice on complex or controversial issues, and generating policy recommendations. In general, commissions hold hearings, conduct research, analyze data, and/or make field visits as they carry out their duties. Most complete their work by delivering their findings, recommendations, or advice in the form of a written report to Congress. For example, the National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States (the 9/11 Commission) was created to “examine and report upon the facts and causes relating to the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001,” and to “investigate and report to the President and Congress on its findings, conclusions, and recommendations for corrective measures that can be taken to prevent acts of terrorism,” among other duties. The commission ultimately submitted a final report to Congress and the President containing its findings and conclusions, along with 48 policy recommendations.

A variety of factors can contribute to the overall cost of a commission. For instance, many commissions hire paid staff, and are often able to request detailees from federal agencies, hire consultants, and obtain administrative support from one or more federal agencies on a reimbursable basis. Additionally, most commissions reimburse the travel expenditures of commissioners and staff, and some compensate commission members. The duration of a commission may also significantly affect its cost; past congressional commissions have been designed to last anywhere from several months to several years.

Using a dataset of congressional commissions that were established from the 101st Congress (1989-1990) through the 115th Congress (2017-2018), this report analyzes methods used to fund 153 congressional commissions. Additionally, this report analyzes actual amounts provided for commissions in appropriations acts, and expenditure patterns of congressional commissions for which data are readily available because they appear in the Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA) database.

When specifying how a commission is funded, most commission statutes either authorize appropriations for commission expenses, authorize the use of funds from other appropriations or accounts, or direct that private donations be the sole source of funding for the commission. Most statutes establishing noncommemorative commissions—commissions that are generally designed to conduct a study, investigate an event, and/or make policy recommendations—either authorize appropriations for commission expenses, or authorize the use of funds from other appropriations or accounts. By contrast, statutes establishing commemorative commissions—commissions designed to celebrate an individual, group, or event—typically authorize appropriations, and/or provide the commission the authority to receive donations, including donations of money, property, and volunteer services.

Although commission statutes typically specify a method by which the commission will be funded, most do not actually provide funds for the commission; funds may be provided in annual appropriations acts, or by other means. Actual funding levels appropriated for past congressional commissions vary from several hundred thousand dollars to several million dollars. No single data source comprehensively documents commission funding or expenditures.

Among those congressional commissions whose expenditures are reported in the FACA database, the total amount reportedly spent by any individual commission ranges from several hundred thousand dollars to over \$13 million. Payments to federal staff and consultants frequently comprise a significant portion of commission expenditures. Many commissions also incur travel expenses, payments to commission members, and other expenses.

For an overview of congressional commissions, see CRS Report R40076, *Congressional Commissions: Overview, Structure, and Legislative Considerations*, by Jacob R. Straus. For additional information on the design of congressional commissions, see CRS Report R45328, *Designing Congressional Commissions: Background and Considerations for Congress*, by William T. Egar. For additional information on commemorative commissions, see CRS Report R41425, *Commemorative Commissions: Overview, Structure, and Funding*, by Jacob R. Straus. For additional information on commission membership structures, see CRS Report RL33313, *Congressional Membership and Appointment Authority to Advisory Commissions, Boards, and Groups*, by Jacob R. Straus and William T. Egar.

Contents

Introduction	1
Congressional Commissions: Funding Mechanisms, Appropriations, and Expenditure	
Patterns	1
Identifying Congressional Commissions	1
Commission Types: Commemorative and Noncommemorative	2
Funding Mechanisms Specified in Authorizing Statutes	3
Authorization of Appropriations	4
Authorize Use of Otherwise Appropriated Funds	4
Donated Funds	5
Appropriations for Congressional Commissions	6
Methodology	6
Data	7
Analysis of Expenditures, Selected Commissions	13
Methodology	14
Data	15
Concluding Remarks	19

Tables

Table 1. Funding Mechanism Provided in Commission Authorizing Legislation.....	3
Table 2. Identified Amounts Specified in Appropriations Acts for Noncommemorative Commissions	8
Table 3. Identified Amounts Specified in Appropriations Acts for Commemorative Commissions	12
Table 4. Reported Expenditures, Selected Commissions	16

Contacts

Author Information.....	19
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Introduction

Congress establishes advisory commissions for a variety of purposes. These include informing Congress, providing expert advice on complex or controversial issues, and generating policy recommendations. To aid Congress, commissions are generally authorized to hold hearings, conduct research, analyze data, and/or make field visits as they carry out their duties. Most complete their work by delivering their findings, recommendations, or advice in the form of a written report to Congress. For example, the National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States (the 9/11 Commission) was created to “examine and report upon the facts and causes relating to the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001,” and to “investigate and report to the President and Congress on its findings, conclusions, and recommendations for corrective measures that can be taken to prevent acts of terrorism.”¹ The commission ultimately submitted a final report to Congress and the President containing its findings and conclusions, along with 48 policy recommendations.² Commissions also may be established to help commemorate an individual, group, or event.

Commissions generally require funding to help meet their statutory goals. When designing a commission, therefore, policymakers may wish to consider both *how* the commission will be funded, as well as *how much* funding the commission will be authorized to receive.

How commissions are funded and the amounts that they receive vary considerably. Several factors can contribute to overall commission costs. These factors might include hiring staff, contracting with outside consultants, and engaging administrative support, among others. Additionally, most commissions reimburse the travel expenditures of commissioners and staff, and some compensate their members. The duration of a commission can also significantly affect its cost; past congressional commissions have been designed to last anywhere from several months to several years.

This report analyzes methods used to fund past congressional commissions; amounts provided for commissions in appropriations acts; and how selected commissions have utilized provided funds.

Congressional Commissions: Funding Mechanisms, Appropriations, and Expenditure Patterns

Identifying Congressional Commissions

While no formal definition exists, for the purposes of this report a congressional commission is defined as a multimember independent entity that

- is established by Congress;
- exists temporarily;
- serves in an advisory capacity;
- is appointed in part or whole by Members of Congress; and
- reports to Congress.

¹ P.L. 107-306, §602, 116 Stat. 2408, November 27, 2002.

² The 9/11 Commission Report is publicly available and can be accessed at https://govinfo.library.unt.edu/911/report/911Report_Exec.pdf.

This definition differentiates a congressional commission from a presidential commission, an executive branch commission, or other bodies with “commission” in their names, while including most entities that fulfill the role commonly associated with commissions: studying policy problems or organizing commemorative activities, and reporting findings to Congress.

To identify congressional commissions, CRS searched Congress.gov for terms and phrases related to commissions within the text of laws enacted between the 101st (1989-1990) and 115th (2017-2018) Congresses.³ Each piece of legislation returned was examined to determine if (1) the legislation established a commission, and (2) the commission met the five criteria outlined above. If the commission met the criteria, its name, public law number, *Statutes-at-Large* citation, date of enactment, and other information were recorded. This approach identified 153 congressional commissions established by statute between 1989 and 2018.

For each commission identified, CRS analyzed the commission’s statute to assess whether the law authorized the appropriation of funds. This approach captures only the funding method provided in the commission’s original legislation. If a commission’s statute was amended by subsequent legislation, that amendment is not reflected in this report.

Commission Types: Commemorative and Noncommemorative

Congressional commissions may be established for a variety of purposes. In general, commissions generally fall into one of two broad categories: commemorative and noncommemorative commissions.

Noncommemorative commissions typically conduct studies, perform investigations, and/or provide expert advice on public policy issues. Such commissions have been created to investigate the September 11 attacks, examine the causes of the financial crisis, develop recommendations to prevent the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, and to review advances in artificial intelligence, among many other issues.⁴ The majority of commissions identified (134 of 153, or approximately 88%) are noncommemorative in nature.

A smaller number of congressional commissions identified (19 of 153, or approximately 12%) have been created to oversee the commemoration of a person, group, or event. Commemorative commissions often “coordinate celebrations, scholarly events, public gatherings, and other activities, often to coincide with a milestone or event.”⁵

Although commemorative and noncommemorative commissions generally share many of the same structural features, the scope and nature of the duties assigned often differ considerably in ways that may affect the amount of funding that Congress may wish to provide. For example, a commission created to investigate a national emergency may require a different length of time, or different levels of staff and other resources to satisfactorily accomplish its duties than a commission designed to commemorate an event. Accordingly, figures contained in this report on commission funding mechanisms and authorized or appropriated levels are broken out separately for commemorative and noncommemorative commissions.

³ The search included such terms as “commission,” “task force,” “advisory,” “board,” “panel,” “independent establishment,” “coordinating committee,” “study group,” and “working group.”

⁴ P.L. 107-306, §601, 116 Stat. 2408, November 27, 2002; P.L. 111-21, §5, 123 Stat. 1625, May 20, 2009; P.L. 110-53, §1851, 121 Stat. 501, August 3, 2007; P.L. 115-232, §1051, August 13, 2018.

⁵ CRS Report R41425, *Commemorative Commissions: Overview, Structure, and Funding*, by Jacob R. Straus.

Funding Mechanisms Specified in Authorizing Statutes

Congressional commissions have been funded in a variety of ways. Commissions generally receive specific authorizations of appropriations, receive funding from a federal agency, or rely on private donations. Some commissions are funded in multiple ways. For example, certain commissions are authorized to receive both appropriations and private donations.

Of the 153 commissions identified, the majority of commission statutes (118, or approximately 77%) state how the commission shall be funded. When establishing how a commission is to be funded, such statutes generally either

- authorize appropriations to be provided in separate legislation for commission expenses;
- provide that commission expenses shall be paid from appropriations otherwise available to a department or agency official; or
- direct that the commission should be funded solely by private donations.

Table 1 shows the number and percentage of commissions falling into each category, broken down by commission type. Each category is discussed in more detail below, along with examples of statutory language.

Commission statutes that prescribe a funding mechanism may vary substantially in the level of detail provided. For example, some statutes specify a dollar amount that is authorized to be appropriated in separate legislation or otherwise made available to the commission; others may identify a source of funding without specifying a dollar value. Similarly, some statutes limit the time period during which funds may be made available to a commission, while others do not.

Table 1. Funding Mechanism Provided in Commission Authorizing Legislation

Commissions created between the 101st and 115th Congresses

Initial Funding Mechanism	All Commissions		Noncommemorative Commissions		Commemorative Commissions	
	Total	Percentage	Total	Percentage	Total	Percentage
Authorization of appropriations	64	41.8%	57	42.5%	7	36.8%
Authorize use of otherwise appropriated funds	38	24.8%	36	26.9%	2	10.5%
Donated funds only	9	5.9%	2	1.5%	7	36.8%
Other ^a	7	4.6%	6	4.5%	1	5.3%
Not specified	35	22.9%	33	24.6%	2	10.5%
Total	153	100%	134	100%	19	100%

Source: CRS search of legislation text on Congress.gov; CRS analysis of commission statutes.

Notes: Some commissions are amended by subsequent legislation; figures reported in this table reflect the funding mechanism specified in the original statute creating each commission. Some statutes that authorize appropriations or provide that commission expenses shall be paid from another appropriation or account also authorize the commission to accept private donations. Any such commission is counted only once in the table above. Column percentages may not sum to 100 due to rounding.

- a. The “Other” category includes commission statutes that do not explicitly authorize appropriations or the use of funds from other appropriations or accounts, but are established within appropriations acts that also provide funds for commission expenses. For example, the Department of Defense Appropriations Act for FY2000 established the Dwight D. Eisenhower Memorial Commission, and stated that “[i]n addition to

amounts provided elsewhere in this Act, there is appropriated to the Commission \$300,000, to remain available until expended” (P.L. 106-79, §8162(m), 113 Stat. 1275, October 25, 1999).

Authorization of Appropriations

Sixty-four of 153 commission statutes identified (approximately 42%) authorized appropriations for commission expenses. Of these, a majority authorized a specific dollar amount, while a smaller number authorized “such sums” as may be necessary.⁶ Provisions authorizing appropriations were included for a slightly larger percentage of noncommemorative commissions (approximately 43%) than for commemorative commissions (approximately 37%).

Authorizations of appropriations do not themselves provide funds for commissions; funding may be provided in appropriations acts.⁷

Some statutes identify specific fiscal years in which appropriations were authorized, and others do not. For example, the statute creating the Antitrust Modernization Commission stated that “[t]here is authorized to be appropriated \$4,000,000 to carry out this subtitle.”⁸ By contrast, the statute creating the Census Monitoring Board provided that “[t]here is authorized to be appropriated \$4,000,000 for each of fiscal years 1998 through 2001 to carry out this section.”⁹

Authorize Use of Otherwise Appropriated Funds

Some commission statutes authorize the use of otherwise appropriated funds for commission expenses. Most often, such statutes either authorize the use of funds appropriated for a particular agency, or instruct a specified agency official to make funds available for commission expenses. A smaller number explicitly authorize a transfer to the commission of funds from a particular account. As shown in **Table 1**, this approach is relatively common among noncommemorative commissions, but less common among commemorative commissions.

As with commission statutes that authorize appropriations, these statutes may or may not identify a specific dollar amount that will be provided for the commission. Statutes that do specify a dollar amount for commission expenses may further specify that “up to” or “not more than” a particular amount be made available. For example, the John S. McCain National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2019 created the National Security Commission on Artificial Intelligence, and specified that up to \$10 million be provided to the commission from amounts authorized to be appropriated for the Department of Defense:

(d) FUNDING.—Of the amounts authorized to be appropriated by this Act for fiscal year 2019 for the Department of Defense, not more than \$10,000,000 shall be made available to the Commission to carry out its duties under this subtitle. Funds made available to the Commission under the preceding sentence shall remain available until expended.¹⁰

⁶ A smaller number (approximately 5%) authorized both a specific dollar amount for certain fiscal years, as well as “such sums” as necessary for other fiscal years. See, for example, the statute creating the Commission on Indian and Native Alaskan Health Care, which “authorized to be appropriated... \$5,000,000 for fiscal year 2001, and such sums as may be necessary for fiscal years 2002 and 2003” (P.L. 106-310, §3307(k), 114 Stat. 1218, October 17, 2000).

⁷ For additional information on the authorization-appropriations process, see CRS Report RS20371, *Overview of the Authorization-Appropriations Process*, by Bill Heniff Jr.

⁸ P.L. 107-273, §11060, 116 Stat. 1859, November 2, 2002.

⁹ P.L. 105-119, §210(g), 111 Stat. 2486, November 26, 1997.

¹⁰ P.L. 115-232, §1051(d), August 13, 2018. In a number of cases, the Comptroller General has considered the question of whether there is a conflict when an authorization specifies a minimum amount (“not less than,” “shall be available only”), and the related appropriation is a lump-sum appropriation which does not expressly mention that specific

By contrast, the legislation creating the Veterans' Disability Benefits Commission directed the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to make funds available for commission expenses, but did not identify a dollar figure. The statute read:

(a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall, upon the request of the chairman of the commission, make available to the commission such amounts as the commission may require to carry out its duties under this title.¹¹

Donated Funds

Some commissions are expected to operate using nonappropriated funds and so are authorized to receive private donations.¹² This approach is more common among commemorative commissions. For example, the act establishing the 400 Years of African-American History Commission authorized the commission to “solicit, accept, use, and dispose of gifts, bequests, or devises of money or other property,”¹³ to accept and use voluntary and uncompensated services,¹⁴ and provided that “[a]ll expenditures of the Commission shall be made solely from donated funds.”¹⁵ Similarly, the act creating the Ronald Reagan Centennial Commission provided the commission with the authority to accept and use gifts of money, services, and property,¹⁶ and further stated that “[n]o Federal funds may be obligated to carry out this Act.”¹⁷

Commissions are often authorized to accept and use donations, including donations of money, property, volunteer service, and other items, even when private monetary donations are not the sole source of a commission's funding. P.L. 102-343, for example, provided the Thomas Jefferson Commemoration Commission the authority to accept and use donated funds to carry out the commission's duties;¹⁸ it also authorized the appropriation of \$312,500 over two fiscal years for commission expenses.¹⁹ The authority to receive donations may also be provided to commissions to facilitate their commemorative functions. For example, the Benjamin Franklin Tercentenary Commission was authorized to accept and use donations of “money, personal services, and real or personal property related to Benjamin Franklin on the occasion of the tercentenary of his birth.”²⁰

activity or project. Because an appropriation must be expended in accordance with the related authorization unless the appropriation act specifically provides otherwise, the Government Accountability Office has concluded that the agency must follow the specified requirement. This result applies even though adherence to the requirement will reduce the amount of funds available for other purposes funded through the same lump-sum appropriation. If Congress subsequently appropriates an amount expressly at variance with the specified minimum, however, the appropriation language will control as the later enacted statute. For more, see GAO-16-464SP, *Principles of Federal Appropriations Law, Chapter 2, The Legal Framework*, 4th ed. (2016) pp. 2-56 - 2-64.

¹¹ P.L. 108-136, §1507, 117 Stat. 1679, November 24, 2003.

¹² Commissions without the statutory authority to solicit funds or accept donations are generally prohibited from engaging in those activities. See U.S. Government Accountability Office, *Principles of Federal Appropriations Law: Third Edition, Volume II*, GAO-06-382SP, February 2006, pp. 6-162, at <http://www.gao.gov/special.pubs/d06382sp.pdf>.

¹³ P.L. 115-102, §5(a), 131 Stat. 2250, January 8, 2018.

¹⁴ P.L. 115-102, §6(g), 131 Stat. 2251, January 8, 2018.

¹⁵ P.L. 115-102, §9, 131 Stat. 2252, January 8, 2018.

¹⁶ P.L. 111-25, §6(d), 123 Stat. 1769, June 2, 2009.

¹⁷ P.L. 111-25, §10, 123 Stat. 1770, June 2, 2009.

¹⁸ P.L. 102-343, §8, 106 Stat. 919, August 17, 1992.

¹⁹ P.L. 102-343, §12, 106 Stat. 920, August 17, 1992.

²⁰ P.L. 107-202, §7(g), 116 Stat. 742, July 24, 2002.

Appropriations for Congressional Commissions

Although statutes establishing commissions typically specify a method by which the commission is to be funded, most do not themselves provide funds for the commission. A statute that authorizes appropriations for a commission, for example, might be followed by an appropriations act that provides funding for the commission. For other commissions, there may be an authorization of appropriations, but an appropriation may not subsequently be made.

Actual funding levels provided for congressional commissions have ranged from several hundred thousand dollars to several million dollars. A commission's need for funds may depend on such factors as the commission's scope and duties, staff compensation, payments to consultants, administrative support, travel expenses, and commissioner compensation, among others. The availability of funding and other resources may affect a commission's ability to satisfactorily accomplish its duties. Accordingly, funding levels for previous commissions may be of interest to policymakers and staff.

As commissions have been funded in a variety of ways, no single data source comprehensively documents the amounts made available to commissions. To better understand the range of funding levels provided to past congressional commissions, this section provides data on amounts specified in appropriations acts for commission expenses.

Methodology

As discussed previously, many commission statutes authorize appropriations for commission expenses. To identify any actual appropriations made for congressional commissions, CRS searched for the name of each of the 153 identified commissions within the text of appropriations acts enacted since the 101st Congress. Each identified appropriations act was analyzed to determine whether the bill provided some specified dollar amount for an identified commission. When identified, each dollar amount associated with the commission was recorded, in addition to the public law number and fiscal year of the relevant appropriations act.²¹

Data Limitations

Although CRS was able to identify a number of appropriations made for commissions, there are several limitations to the data and subsequent interpretations. As a result, the amounts listed may in some cases be an approximation of the amount received by the commission, rather than a precise amount. These limitations include the following:

- Amounts identified for commissions in appropriations acts do not necessarily reflect the total amount available for any particular commission. Some commissions may be funded through a combination of appropriations and other sources. For example, the Thomas Jefferson Commemoration Commission was provided the authority to receive donations of money and volunteer services to

²¹ Amounts may be provided for commission expenses in appropriations acts in a variety of ways, including the creation of a separate appropriation account for the commission, directing that some amount of a lump-sum appropriation be used for commission expenses, and the transfer of funds to the commission from another account. For more information on the appropriations process, see CRS Report R42388, *The Congressional Appropriations Process: An Introduction*, coordinated by James V. Saturno.

- carry out its functions,²² and was also provided funds in two subsequent appropriations acts.²³
- As discussed previously, commissions have been funded in a variety of ways, including appropriations, private donations, authorization of the use of funds within a lump-sum provided for an account, and the transfer or reprogramming of appropriated funds.²⁴ The data presented below on amounts contained in appropriations acts should not be considered exhaustive of all funding received by congressional commissions over time, as commissions that did not receive a specific appropriation will necessarily be excluded.
 - Committee reports that accompany appropriations bills may provide details regarding committee expectations about how certain appropriated funds are to be spent. Because this search was conducted within the text of appropriations acts, directions for commission appropriations within committee reports are not included.
 - When making amounts available to commissions, appropriations acts may cite the statute creating the commission rather than the name of the commission. For example, P.L. 105-78 directed that “\$900,000 shall be for carrying out section 4021 of Public Law 105-33.”²⁵ Section 4021 of P.L. 105-33 established the National Bipartisan Commission on the Future of Medicare. Because CRS’s search was conducted using the name of the commission, similar results may be excluded.
 - Along similar lines, continuing resolutions generally provide funding to continue governmental activities without explicitly referencing specific activities by name.²⁶ Because CRS’s search was conducted using the name of the commission, any amounts made available to commissions by continuing resolutions may be omitted.
 - In some cases, an appropriations act may place a maximum on the level of funding available. For example, the Departments of Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act for FY1994 provided that, of funds appropriated for a particular account, “not more than \$1,800,000” be made available for expenses of the Commission on the Social Security “Notch” Issue.²⁷ In such cases, the amount of funding ultimately received by the commission may be less than the specified amount.

Data

Table 2 and **Table 3** display data on amounts specified in appropriations acts for noncommemorative and commemorative commissions, respectively. For commissions where

²² P.L. 102-343, §8, 106 Stat. 918, August 17, 1992.

²³ P.L. 102-395, 106 Stat. 1836, October 6, 1992; P.L. 103-121, 107 Stat. 1184, October 27, 1993.

²⁴ For additional information on the transfer and reprogramming of appropriations, see CRS Report R43098, *Transfer and Reprogramming of Appropriations: An Overview of Authorities, Limitations, and Procedures*, by Michelle D. Christensen.

²⁵ P.L. 105-78, 111 Stat. 1484, November 13, 1997.

²⁶ For more information on continuing resolutions, see CRS Report R42647, *Continuing Resolutions: Overview of Components and Practices*, coordinated by Kate P. McClanahan.

²⁷ P.L. 103-112, 107 Stat. 1096, October 21, 1993.

amounts in appropriations bills were identified, each table contains the name of the commission and a citation to the public law that created it, as well as the dollar amount identified. For every dollar amount, the fiscal year and public law number of the relevant appropriations act are included. Amounts are provided in both nominal as well as constant 2019 dollars.²⁸ Any identifiable rescissions of commission funding contained in appropriations acts are shown in parentheses.

As shown in **Table 2** and **Table 3** below, amounts made available to commissions vary widely. Some commissions receive a single appropriation; others receive multiple appropriations over several fiscal years. Amounts provided range from several hundred thousand dollars to several million dollars, and may or may not be equal to any amounts explicitly authorized to be appropriated for commission expenses in the commission’s original authorizing statute.

**Table 2. Identified Amounts Specified in Appropriations Acts for
Noncommemorative Commissions**
101st through 115th Congresses

Commission Name and Establishing Statute	Identified Amounts (Nominal Dollars)	Identified Amounts (Constant 2019 Dollars)
Advisory Commission on Electronic Commerce (P.L. 105-277)	FY2000: \$1,400,000 (P.L. 106-113)	FY2000: \$2,236,798 (P.L. 106-113)
Amtrak Reform Council (P.L. 105-134)	FY1998: \$2,450,000 (P.L. 105-174) FY1999: \$450,000 (P.L. 105-277) FY2000: \$750,000 (P.L. 106-69) FY2001: \$750,000 (P.L. 106-346) FY2002: \$225,000 (P.L. 107-87)	FY1998: \$4,133,142 (P.L. 105-174) FY1999: \$744,286 (P.L. 105-277) FY2000: \$1,198,285 (P.L. 106-69) FY2001: \$1,158,704 (P.L. 106-346) FY2002: \$336,635 (P.L. 107-87)
Antitrust Modernization Commission (P.L. 107-273)	FY2004: \$1,200,000 (P.L. 108-199) FY2005: \$1,187,000 (P.L. 108-447) FY2006: \$1,172,000 (P.L. 109-108) FY2007: \$462,000 (P.L. 110-5)	FY2004: \$1,625,152 (P.L. 108-199) FY2005: \$1,534,329 (P.L. 108-447) FY2006: \$1,452,736 (P.L. 109-108) FY2007: \$554,441 (P.L. 110-5)
Census Monitoring Board (P.L. 105-119)	FY1998: \$4,000,000 (P.L. 105-119) FY1999: \$4,000,000 (P.L. 105-277) FY2000: \$3,500,000 (P.L. 106-113) FY2001: \$3,500,000 (P.L. 106-553)	FY1998: \$6,747,988 (P.L. 105-119) FY1999: \$6,615,875 (P.L. 105-277) FY2000: \$5,591,995 (P.L. 106-113) FY2001: \$5,407,287 (P.L. 106-553)
Commission on Management of the Agency for International Development Programs (P.L. 101-513)	FY1991: \$500,000 (P.L. 101-513)	FY1991: \$941,431 (P.L. 101-513)
Commission on Ocean Policy (P.L. 106-256)	FY1999: \$3,500,000 (P.L. 105-277) ^a FY2001: \$1,000,000 (P.L. 106-553) FY2002: \$3,000,000 (P.L. 107-77) FY2003: \$2,000,000 (P.L. 108-7)	FY1999: \$5,788,891 (P.L. 105-277) ^a FY2001: \$1,544,939 (P.L. 106-553) FY2002: \$4,488,468 (P.L. 107-77) FY2003: \$2,810,574 (P.L. 108-7)
Commission on Online Child Protection (P.L. 105-277)	FY2001: \$750,000 (P.L. 106-554)	FY2001: \$1,158,704 (P.L. 106-554)

²⁸ All constant dollar figures are calculated using the “Total” GDP deflator contained in *Table 10.1—Gross Domestic Product and Deflators Used in the Historical Tables: 1940–2024* in the President’s FY2020 budget request.

Commission Name and Establishing Statute	Identified Amounts (Nominal Dollars)	Identified Amounts (Constant 2019 Dollars)
Commission on Protecting and Reducing Government Secrecy (P.L. 103-236)	FY1995: \$600,000 (P.L. 103-317)	FY1995: \$1,070,005 (P.L. 103-317)
Commission on the Abraham Lincoln Study Abroad Fellowship Program (P.L. 108-199)	FY2004: \$500,000 (P.L. 108-199)	FY2004: \$677,147 (P.L. 108-199)
Commission on the Advancement of Federal Law Enforcement (P.L. 104-132)	FY1997: \$2,000,000 (P.L. 105-18)	FY1997: \$3,437,855 (P.L. 105-18)
Commission on the Future of the United States Aerospace Industry (P.L. 106-398) ^b	FY2002: \$1,450,000 (P.L. 107-117) ^b	FY2002: \$2,169,426 (P.L. 107-117) ^b
Commission on the Prevention of Weapons of Mass Destruction Proliferation and Terrorism (P.L. 110-53)	FY2009: \$1,100,000 (P.L. 111-8)	FY2009: \$1,273,672 (P.L. 111-8)
Commission on the Review of the Overseas Military Facility Structure (P.L. 108-132)	FY2004: \$3,000,000 (P.L. 108-132)	FY2004: \$4,062,881 (P.L. 108-132)
Commission on the Social Security "Notch" Issue (P.L. 102-393)	FY1994: \$1,800,000 (P.L. 103-112)	FY1994: \$3,272,127 (P.L. 103-112)
Commission to Promote Investment in America's Infrastructure (P.L. 102-240)	FY1993: \$200,000 (P.L. 102-388)	FY1993: \$366,998 (P.L. 102-388)
Financial Crisis Inquiry Commission (P.L. 111-21)	FY2009: \$8,000,000 (P.L. 111-32) FY2010: \$1,800,000 (P.L. 111-212)	FY2009: \$9,263,068 (P.L. 111-32) FY2010: \$2,047,000 (P.L. 111-212)
Glass Ceiling Commission (P.L. 102-166)	FY1993: \$750,000 (P.L. 102-394) FY1994: \$744,000 (P.L. 103-112)	FY1993: \$1,376,242 (P.L. 102-394) FY1994: \$1,352,479 (P.L. 103-112)
Helping to Enhance the Livelihood of People (HELP) Around the Globe Commission (P.L. 108-199)	FY2004: \$3,000,000 (P.L. 108-199) FY2005: \$1,000,000 (P.L. 108-447)	FY2004: \$4,062,881 (P.L. 108-199) FY2005: \$1,292,611 (P.L. 108-447)
Independent Commission (P.L. 101-121)	FY1990: \$250,000 (P.L. 101-121)	FY1990: \$494,016 (P.L. 101-121)
Joint Federal-State Commission on Policies and Programs Affecting Alaska Natives (P.L. 101-379)	FY1991: \$300,000 (P.L. 101-512)	FY1991: \$564,858 (P.L. 101-512)
Millennial Housing Commission (P.L. 106-74)	FY2000: \$2,000,000 (P.L. 106-74) FY2002: \$1,500,000 (P.L. 107-73)	FY2000: \$3,195,426 (P.L. 106-74) FY2002: \$2,244,234 (P.L. 107-73)

Commission Name and Establishing Statute	Identified Amounts (Nominal Dollars)	Identified Amounts (Constant 2019 Dollars)
National Advisory Council on the Public Service (P.L. 101-363)	FY1992: \$337,000 (P.L. 102-141) FY1993: \$616,000 (P.L. 102-393)	FY1992: \$624,596 (P.L. 102-141) FY1993: \$1,130,353 (P.L. 102-393)
National Bankruptcy Review Commission (P.L. 103-394)	FY1995: \$1,000,000 (P.L. 104-19) FY1997: \$494,000 (P.L. 104-208)	FY1995: \$1,783,342 (P.L. 104-19) FY1997: \$849,150 (P.L. 104-208)
National Bipartisan Commission on the Future of Medicare (P.L. 105-33)	FY1998: \$900,000 (P.L. 105-78)	FY1998: \$1,518,297 (P.L. 105-78)
National Civil Aviation Review Commission (P.L. 104-264)	FY1997: \$2,400,000 (P.L. 104-205)	FY1997: \$4,125,426 (P.L. 104-205)
National Commission on American Indian, Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiian Housing (P.L. 101-235)	FY1990: \$500,000 (P.L. 101-302) FY1992: \$500,000 (P.L. 102-139) FY1993: \$500,000 (P.L. 102-389)	FY1990: \$988,033 (P.L. 101-302) FY1992: \$926,701 (P.L. 102-139) FY1993: \$917,495 (P.L. 102-389)
National Commission on Children and Disasters (P.L. 110-161) ^c	FY2010: \$1,000,000 (P.L. 111-117) ^c	FY2010: \$1,137,222 (P.L. 111-117) ^c
National Commission on Financial Institution Reform, Recovery, and Enforcement (P.L. 101-647)	FY1992: \$1,000,000 (P.L. 102-139)	FY1992: \$1,853,401 (P.L. 102-139)
National Commission on Intermodal Transportation (P.L. 102-240)	FY1991: \$458,629 (P.L. 103-122)	FY1991: \$863,535 (P.L. 103-122)
National Commission on Judicial Discipline and Removal (P.L. 101-650)	FY1991: \$750,000 (P.L. 102-27) FY1993: \$443,000 (P.L. 102-395)	FY1991: \$1,412,146 (P.L. 102-27) FY1993: \$812,900 (P.L. 102-395)
National Commission on Manufactured Housing (P.L. 101-625)	FY1991: \$500,000 (P.L. 102-27) FY1992: (\$500,000) (P.L. 102-368) FY1992: \$500,000 (P.L. 102-368) FY1993: \$1,000,000 (P.L. 102-389)	FY1991: \$941,431 (P.L. 102-27) FY1992: P.L. 102-368 rescinded funds FY1992: \$926,701 (P.L. 102-368) FY1993: \$1,834,989 (P.L. 102-389)
National Commission on Severely Distressed Public Housing (P.L. 101-235)	FY1990: \$2,000,000 (P.L. 101-302) FY1992: \$250,000 (P.L. 102-229) FY1992: \$250,000 (P.L. 102-368)	FY1990: \$3,952,131 (P.L. 101-302) FY1992: \$463,350 (P.L. 102-229) FY1992: \$463,350 (P.L. 102-368)
National Commission on Terrorism (P.L. 105-277)	FY1999: \$839,500 (P.L. 106-31)	FY1999: \$1,388,507 (P.L. 106-31)
National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States (P.L. 107-306) ^d	FY2003: \$11,000,000 (P.L. 108-11) ^d	FY2003: \$15,458,156 (P.L. 108-11) ^d
National Commission on the Cost of Higher Education (P.L. 105-18)	FY1992: \$650,000 (P.L. 105-18)	FY1992: \$1,204,711 (P.L. 105-18)

Commission Name and Establishing Statute	Identified Amounts (Nominal Dollars)	Identified Amounts (Constant 2019 Dollars)
National Commission on the Future Role of United States Nuclear Weapons (P.L. 102-172)	FY1992: \$1,500,000 (P.L. 102-172)	FY1992: \$2,780,102 (P.L. 102-172)
National Commission to Support Law Enforcement (P.L. 101-515)	FY1994: \$500,000 (P.L. 103-121)	FY1994: \$908,924 (P.L. 103-121)
National Gambling Impact Study Commission (P.L. 104-169)	FY1997: \$4,000,000 (P.L. 104-208) FY1998: \$1,000,000 (P.L. 105-119)	FY1997: \$6,875,710 (P.L. 104-208) FY1998: \$1,686,997 (P.L. 105-119)
National Museum of African American History and Culture Plan for Action Presidential Commission (P.L. 107-106)	FY2002: \$2,000,000 (P.L. 107-116)	FY2002: \$2,992,312 (P.L. 107-116)
National Prison Rape Reduction Commission (P.L. 108-79)	FY2004: \$2,175,000 (P.L. 108-199)	FY2004: \$2,945,588 (P.L. 108-199)
Presidential Advisory Commission on Holocaust Assets in the United States (P.L. 105-186)	FY1999: \$1,626,666 (P.L. 105-277) ^e FY2000: \$975,666 (P.L. 106-79) FY2000: \$1,744,000 (P.L. 106-113) ^f FY2001: \$1,400,000 (P.L. 106-553)	FY1999: \$2,690,454 (P.L. 105-277) ^e FY2000: \$1,558,834 (P.L. 106-79) FY2000: \$2,786,411 (P.L. 106-113) ^f FY2001: \$2,162,915 (P.L. 106-553)
Trade Deficit Review Commission (P.L. 105-277)	FY1999: \$2,000,000 (P.L. 105-277)	FY1999: \$3,307,937 (P.L. 105-277)
Twenty-First Century Workforce Commission (P.L. 105-220) ^g	FY1999: \$500,000 (P.L. 105-277) ^g	FY1999: \$826,984 (P.L. 105-277) ^g
Web-Based Education Commission (P.L. 105-244) ^h	FY2001: \$250,000 (P.L. 106-554) ^h	FY2001: \$386,235 (P.L. 106-554) ^h
Western Hemisphere Drug Policy Commission (P.L. 114-323)	FY2019: \$1,500,000 (P.L. 116-6)	FY2019: \$1,500,000 (P.L. 116-6)

Sources: CRS analysis of Congress.gov data. Constant dollar figures are calculated using the “Total” GDP deflator contained in *Table 10.1—Gross Domestic Product and Deflators Used in the Historical Tables: 1940–2024* in the President’s FY2020 budget request.

Notes: Identified rescissions of commission funds contained in appropriations acts are shown in parentheses. Amounts contained in the table reflect those amounts for commission expenses that could be identified within the text of appropriations acts; data may not be exhaustive of all funding received by congressional commissions over time, and may not necessarily reflect the total cost of any commission. Some commissions may receive additional funding from other sources, such as private donations.

- a. P.L. 105-277 provided \$3.5 million for the Commission on Ocean Policy, and specified that “the funds provided in this Act for the Commission on Ocean Policy shall become available only upon the enactment of authorizing legislation.”
- b. The act creating the Commission on the Future of the United States Aerospace Industry specified that “[a]ny expenses of the Commission shall be paid from funds available to the Director [of the Office of Management and Budget]” (P.L. 106-398, 114 Stat. 1654A-302, October 30, 2000).

- c. P.L. 110-329 additionally specified that “[a]mounts provided... for ‘Department of Health and Human Services – Office of the Secretary – General Departmental Management’ are also available for the purpose of funding the National Commission on Children and Disasters” (P.L. 110-329, §157(a), 122 Stat. 3582, September 30, 2008).
- d. In addition, the Intelligence Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2003 that created the National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States authorized a transfer to the commission of \$3,000,000 (approximately \$4,215,861 in constant 2019 dollars) from the National Foreign Intelligence Program (P.L. 107-306, §611(a), 116 Stat. 2413, November 27, 2002). Additionally, P.L. 108-207 also authorized a transfer to the commission of up to \$1,000,000 (approximately \$1,354,294 in constant 2019 dollars) from “amounts appropriated for the programs and activities of the Federal Government for fiscal year 2004 that remain available for obligation” (P.L. 108-207, §1(c)(2), 118 Stat. 556, March 16, 2004).
- e. P.L. 105-277 authorized a transfer to the Presidential Advisory Commission on Holocaust Assets in the United States of \$813,333 from funds made available under the heading “Department of Justice – Legal Activities – Salaries and Expenses, General Legal Activities,” and \$813,333 from funds available under the heading “Department of State – Administration of Foreign Affairs – Salaries and Expenses.”
- f. P.L. 106-113 authorized a transfer to the Presidential Advisory Commission on Holocaust Assets in the United States of \$582,000 from funds available under the heading “Department of Justice – Legal Activities – Salaries and Expenses, General Legal Activities,” as well as up to \$1,162,000 from funds available under the heading “Department of State – Administration of Foreign Affairs – Diplomatic and Consular Programs.”
- g. In addition, the Joint Explanatory Statement of the Committee of Conference to accompany H.R. 3194, the Consolidated Appropriations Act for FY2000, stated that “[t]he conference agreement includes \$500,000 for the activities of the Twenty-First Century Workforce Commission” (H.Rept. 106-479, p. 590).
- h. In addition, the Joint Explanatory Statement of the Committee of Conference to accompany H.R. 4328, the Omnibus Consolidated and Emergency Supplemental Appropriations Act for FY1999, stated that “[t]he conference agreement provides \$450,000 for a Web-Based Education Commission” (H.Rept. 105-825, p. 1305).

Table 3. Identified Amounts Specified in Appropriations Acts for Commemorative Commissions

101st through 115th Congresses

Commission Name and Establishing Statute	Identified Amounts (Nominal Dollars)	Identified Amounts (Constant 2019 Dollars)
Abraham Lincoln Bicentennial Commission (P.L. 106-173)	FY2001: \$461,000 (P.L. 106-554) FY2002: \$500,000 (P.L. 107-68) FY2003: \$500,000 (P.L. 108-7) FY2004: \$250,000 (P.L. 108-83) FY2005: \$500,000 (P.L. 108-447) FY2006: \$600,000 (P.L. 109-55) FY2008: \$750,000 (P.L. 110-161) FY2009: \$1,495,000 (P.L. 111-8) FY2010: \$750,000 (P.L. 111-68)	FY2001: \$712,217 (P.L. 106-554) FY2002: \$748,078 (P.L. 107-68) FY2003: \$702,643 (P.L. 108-7) FY2004: \$338,573 (P.L. 108-83) FY2005: \$646,305 (P.L. 108-447) FY2006: \$743,722 (P.L. 109-55) FY2008: \$866,663 (P.L. 110-161) FY2009: \$1,731,036 (P.L. 111-8) FY2010: \$852,917 (P.L. 111-68)

Commission Name and Establishing Statute	Identified Amounts (Nominal Dollars)	Identified Amounts (Constant 2019 Dollars)
Dwight D. Eisenhower Memorial Commission (P.L. 106-79)	FY2000: \$300,000 (P.L. 106-79) FY2002: \$2,600,000 (P.L. 107-117) FY2006: \$1,700,000 (P.L. 109-148) FY2008: \$2,000,000 (P.L. 110-161) FY2009: \$2,000,000 (P.L. 111-8) FY2010: \$3,000,000 (P.L. 111-88) FY2011: \$0 (P.L. 112-10) FY2012: \$2,000,000 (P.L. 112-74) FY2013: \$1,050,000 (P.L. 113-6) FY2014: \$1,000,000 (P.L. 113-76) FY2015: \$1,000,000 (P.L. 113-235) FY2016: \$1,000,000 (P.L. 114-113) FY2017: \$1,600,000 (P.L. 115-31) FY2018: \$1,800,000 (P.L. 115-141) FY2019: \$1,800,000 (P.L. 116-6)	FY2000: \$479,314 (P.L. 106-79) FY2002: \$3,890,005 (P.L. 107-117) FY2006: \$2,107,211 (P.L. 109-148) FY2008: \$2,311,102 (P.L. 110-161) FY2009: \$2,315,767 (P.L. 111-8) FY2010: \$3,411,666 (P.L. 111-88) FY2011: \$0 (P.L. 112-10) FY2012: \$2,179,600 (P.L. 112-74) FY2013: \$1,136,336 (P.L. 113-6) FY2014: \$1,065,402 (P.L. 113-76) FY2015: \$1,061,046 (P.L. 113-235) FY2016: \$1,057,545 (P.L. 114-113) FY2017: \$1,667,317 (P.L. 115-31) FY2018: \$1,836,742 (P.L. 115-141) FY2019: \$1,800,000 (P.L. 116-6)
Thomas Jefferson Commemoration Commission (P.L. 102-343)	FY1993: \$200,000 (P.L. 102-395) FY1993: (\$100,000) (P.L. 103-50) FY1994: \$62,000 (P.L. 103-121)	FY1993: \$366,998 (P.L. 102-395) FY1993: P.L. 103-50 rescinded funds FY1994: \$112,707 (P.L. 103-121)
United States Semiquincentennial Commission (P.L. 114-196)	FY2019: \$500,000 (P.L. 116-6)	FY2019: \$500,000 (P.L. 116-6)
Women's Suffrage Centennial Commission (P.L. 115-31)	FY2017: \$2,000,000 (P.L. 115-31) FY2018: \$1,000,000 (P.L. 115-141) FY2019: \$1,000,000 (P.L. 116-6)	FY2017: \$2,084,146 (P.L. 115-31) FY2018: \$1,020,412 (P.L. 115-141) FY2019: \$1,000,000 (P.L. 116-6)
World War I Centennial Commission (P.L. 112-272)	FY2018: \$7,000,000 (P.L. 115-141) FY2019: \$7,000,000 (P.L. 116-6)	FY2018: \$7,142,884 (P.L. 115-141) FY2019: \$7,000,000 (P.L. 116-6)

Sources: CRS analysis of Congress.gov data. Constant dollar figures are calculated using the “Total” GDP deflator contained in *Table 10.1—Gross Domestic Product and Deflators Used in the Historical Tables: 1940–2024* in the President’s FY2020 budget request.

Notes: Identified rescissions of commission funds contained in appropriations acts are shown in parentheses. Amounts contained in the table reflect those amounts for commission expenses that could be identified within the text of appropriations acts. Data may not be exhaustive of all funding received by congressional commissions over time, and may not necessarily reflect the total cost of any commission. Some commissions may receive additional funding from other sources, such as private donations.

Analysis of Expenditures, Selected Commissions

Generally, a commission may utilize its funds to pay commissioners and staff, hire consultants, and reimburse travel expenses, in addition to other administrative costs. Understanding how commissions utilize funds may be of interest to policymakers wishing to design new commissions or oversee existing commissions.

As with commission funding, no single data source contains comprehensive information on commission expenditures. Congress has required some commissions to periodically submit

financial reports that detail commission expenditures,²⁹ but for most identified congressional commissions, expenditure data are not publicly available.

To better understand how commissions have used funds provided to them, this report analyzes data for the subset of congressional commissions that reported their expenditures in the Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA) database.

Methodology

FACA requires formal reporting, administration, and oversight procedures for committees or commissions advising the executive branch. Whether FACA requirements apply to a particular advisory commission may depend on a number of factors, including whether most appointments to the commission are made by members of the legislative or the executive branch, and to which branch of government the commission must issue its report, findings, or recommendations.³⁰ Although many congressional commissions are exempt from FACA, some are subject to FACA and report their expenditures to the General Services Administration (GSA).

GSA collects and reports advisory commission operational data, including information on commission expenditures, in the FACA database.³¹ Within the FACA database, CRS searched for the name of the 153 congressional commissions identified to locate commissions that reported expenditures.³² Twenty of 153 identified commissions appeared in the database and reported expenditures during one or more fiscal years.³³

FACA committees report their expenditures across several categories, including personnel costs, travel and per diem costs, and “other” costs.³⁴ Personnel and travel costs are both further disaggregated by whether those costs were attributable to federal commission members, nonfederal commission members, federal staff, or consultants. CRS calculated the total reported expenditures of each commission, as well as the percentage of commission expenditures attributable to commissioner pay; staff pay; consultant pay; total travel and per diem expenses of all members, staff, and consultants; and “other” expenses.

Data Limitations

Congressional commissions that are subject to FACA and appear in the FACA database may differ from commissions that are not subject to FACA in ways that might affect their overall costs

²⁹ See, for example, the statute creating the Virgin Islands of the United States Centennial Commission, which required that the commission submit annual reports that contained information related to, among other items, “the revenue and expenditures of the Commission” (P.L. 114-224, §7(a), 130 Stat. 923, September 29, 2016).

³⁰ For additional information on the Federal Advisory Committee Act, see CRS Report R44253, *Federal Advisory Committees: An Introduction and Overview*, by Meghan M. Stuessy.

³¹ For additional information on the operations of committees covered by the Federal Advisory Committee Act, see CRS Report R44248, *The Federal Advisory Committee Act: Analysis of Operations and Costs*, by Meghan M. Stuessy. The FACA database is available at <https://facadatabase.gov/>.

³² A small number of identified congressional commissions appeared in the FACA database, but reported zero expenditures. These commissions are excluded from the analysis.

³³ At the time of this writing, FACA data made available in bulk through <https://facadatabase.gov/> include data on advisory committees that reported expenditures between FY1997 through FY2017. To ensure that the analysis of commission expenditures relies on complete data, the expenditure data presented in this report exclude any commission that either began before FY1997, or terminated after FY2017.

³⁴ According to the *FACA Database Public Access Help Manual*, expenditures categorized as “other” include “all administrative costs not attributable either to personnel payments or to travel and per diem. This may include the costs of meeting rooms, transcripts, maintenance of a committee website, etc.” For additional information, see <https://www.facadatabase.gov/FACA/apex/FACAPublicHelp> (accessed June 6, 2019).

and expenditure patterns. Consequently, figures on cost and expenditures presented below may not be representative of costs and expenditures of all congressional commissions. The accuracy and completeness of expenditure data contained in the FACA database have not been independently verified by CRS.

Data

Table 4 contains data on the reported expenditures of 20 congressional commissions that appeared in the FACA database. Specifically, **Table 4** contains the commission name and statute establishing the commission; fiscal years during which the commission reported expenditures; the total amount spent, in both nominal and constant 2019 dollars; and the percentage of reported expenditures attributable to commissioner pay, federal staff pay, consultant pay, travel and per diem expenditures, and other expenditures.

The total amount spent by the selected commissions varied from a low of \$286,851 to a high of \$13,855,998 (between \$388,480 and \$17,117,361 in constant 2019 dollars). Among the commissions analyzed, expenditures on federal staff and consultant pay often constituted a significant portion of reported spending; expenditures attributable to federal staff and consultant pay constituted a majority of spending for more than half of the commissions identified. Total travel and per diem expenditures ranged from a low of approximately 2% to a high of approximately 34% of commission spending.

Many congressional commissions do not compensate their members.³⁵ Consistent with this finding, many commissions listed in **Table 4** report zero expenditures on the pay of federal and nonfederal commission members. Among commissions that report payments to members, these payments constituted as much as approximately 29% of commission spending, though most constituted less than 10%.

³⁵ For additional information on commission structure, see CRS Report R45328, *Designing Congressional Commissions: Background and Considerations for Congress*, by William T. Egar; and CRS Report R40076, *Congressional Commissions: Overview, Structure, and Legislative Considerations*, by Jacob R. Straus.

Table 4. Reported Expenditures, Selected Commissions
Congressional Commissions Reporting Expenditures in the FACA Database, FY1997-2017

Commission Name and Establishing Statute	Fiscal Years	Total Reported Expenditures (Nominal Dollars)	Total Reported Expenditures (Constant 2019 Dollars)	Percentage of Total Reported Expenditures				
				Payments, Commission Members	Payments, Federal Staff	Payments, Consultants	Travel and Per Diem	Other Expenditures
Antitrust Modernization Commission (P.L. 107-273)	2004-2007	\$4,449,000	\$5,535,394	6.2%	52.1%	4.3%	5.9%	31.5%
Commission on 21 st Century Production Agriculture (P.L. 104-127)	1998-2001	\$604,135	\$977,182	0.0%	25.4%	11.4%	16.2%	47.0%
Commission on Care (P.L. 113-146)	2015-2016	\$2,938,738	\$3,108,744	14.0%	64.2%	8.6%	2.3%	10.9%
Commission on the Advancement of Women and Minorities in Science, Engineering, and Technology Development (P.L. 105-255)	1999-2000	\$493,070	\$804,605	7.1%	74.0%	0.0%	15.2%	3.7%
Commission on the Future of the United States Aerospace Industry (P.L. 106-398)	2001-2003	\$4,022,532	\$5,987,906	0.0%	51.7%	26.4%	7.6%	14.3%
Commission to Eliminate Child Abuse and Neglect Fatalities (P.L. 112-275)	2014-2016	\$3,893,318	\$4,132,029	0.0%	72.5%	0.7%	8.4%	18.4%
Guam War Claims Review Commission (P.L. 107-333)	2003-2004	\$286,851	\$388,480	0.0%	11.2%	19.6%	34.4%	34.9%
National Commission on Children and Disasters (P.L. 110-161)	2008-2011	\$3,046,852	\$3,500,577	0.0%	8.1%	17.7%	6.7%	67.5%
National Commission on the Cost of Higher Education (P.L. 105-18)	1997-1998	\$686,980	\$1,174,249	0.0%	58.2%	32.6%	7.5%	1.6%

Commission Name and Establishing Statute	Fiscal Years	Total Reported Expenditures (Nominal Dollars)	Total Reported Expenditures (Constant 2019 Dollars)	Percentage of Total Reported Expenditures				
				Payments, Commission Members	Payments, Federal Staff	Payments, Consultants	Travel and Per Diem	Other Expenditures
National Commission on the Future of the Army (P.L. 113-291)	2015-2016	\$6,535,252	\$6,928,767	3.5%	56.6%	14.7%	7.4%	17.7%
National Commission on the Structure of the Air Force (P.L. 112-239)	2013-2014	\$8,520,117	\$9,113,522	3.1%	39.6%	0.0%	13.3%	44.1%
National Gambling Impact Study Commission (P.L. 104-169)	1997-1999	\$5,000,000	\$8,342,260	4.0%	30.7%	45.5%	4.3%	15.5%
National Museum of African American History and Culture Plan for Action Presidential Commission (P.L. 107-106)	2002-2003	\$2,835,828	\$4,110,097	0.0%	8.8%	45.5%	19.7%	25.9%
National Surface Transportation Infrastructure Financing Commission (P.L. 109-59)	2007-2009	\$484,929	\$561,492	0.0%	13.1%	84.7%	2.1%	0.0%
Panel to Review Sexual Misconduct Allegations at the United States Air Force Academy (P.L. 108-111)	2003-2004	\$498,000	\$696,620	0.0%	16.7%	0.0%	20.1%	63.3%
Technical Study Panel on the Utilization of Belt Air and the Composition and Fire Retardant Properties of Belt Materials in Underground Coal Mining (P.L. 109-236)	2007-2008	\$341,500	\$407,247	28.9%	38.5%	1.1%	21.0%	10.5%
Ticket to Work and Work Incentives Advisory Panel (P.L. 106-170)	2000-2008	\$11,901,489	\$16,041,835	16.2%	29.6%	2.9%	7.9%	43.4%
Veterans' Disability Benefits Commission (P.L. 108-136)	2005-2008	\$13,855,998	\$17,117,361	7.8%	16.1%	21.6%	3.0%	51.4%
Web-Based Education Commission (P.L. 105-244)	1999-2001	\$694,530	\$1,096,470	0.0%	57.5%	14.6%	11.6%	16.2%

Commission Name and Establishing Statute	Fiscal Years	Total Reported Expenditures (Nominal Dollars)	Total Reported Expenditures (Constant 2019 Dollars)	Percentage of Total Reported Expenditures				
				Payments, Commission Members	Payments, Federal Staff	Payments, Consultants	Travel and Per Diem	Other Expenditures
Women's Progress Commemoration Commission (P.L. 105-341)	2000-2001	\$410,689	\$635,038	1.9%	73.0%	0.0%	7.5%	17.5%

Source: CRS analysis of FACA database (available at <https://facadatabase.gov>). Constant dollar figures are calculated using the “Total” GDP deflator contained in *Table 10.1—Gross Domestic Product and Deflators Used in the Historical Tables: 1940–2024* in the President’s FY2020 budget request.

Notes: Data contained in the table reflect only those congressional commissions that reported expenditures in the FACA database, and may not be representative of the cost and expenditures of all congressional commissions. The accuracy and completeness of expenditure data contained in the FACA database have not been independently verified by CRS. Percentages contained in the table may not sum to 100 due to rounding. Percentages in the “Payments, Commission Members” column include payments to both federal and nonfederal members. Percentages in the “Travel and Per Diem” column reflect all reported travel and per diem expenditures (whether attributable to federal commission members, nonfederal commission members, federal staff, or consultants).

Concluding Remarks

Congressional commissions have been established for a variety of purposes, and can help serve a critical role by informing Congress, providing expert advice on complex or controversial issues, generating policy recommendations, or organizing commemorative activities. These commissions have been funded in a variety of ways, and their total cost has varied considerably. The cost of any particular commission may depend on its scope, duties, and duration, among other factors, and the degree to which it can satisfactorily accomplish its duties may depend in part on the resources made available to it.

No single data source comprehensively documents either the funds made available for congressional commissions, or how commissions have utilized the funds available to them. More complete and reliable data on commission funding and expenditure patterns may benefit policymakers who wish to use such data to guide the creation of future commissions, or to facilitate the oversight of such entities.

If Congress wished to systematize the collection of information on commission funding or expenditures, a number of options are available. Congress has on several occasions required commissions to submit periodic financial reports that detail any income and expenditures. Similar approaches that require commissions to submit periodic financial reports, to include funding and expenditure data within the commission's final report, or otherwise make financial data publicly available, may assist Congress in keeping informed of commission operations and ensure that a commission is utilizing its resources in a desired manner. On the other hand, such reporting requirements may place additional burdens on limited commission time and resources.

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