

Statement on Maintaining the Integrity of U.S. Presidential Appointments of Scientists

August 18, 2004

The American Sociological Association (ASA) strongly urges the President of the United States to consider scientific expertise as the primary basis for soliciting and nominating or appointing advisors to scientific, technological, and health-related posts or governmental advisory committees. Upon recommendation of its governing Council, the ASA believes no criteria other than scientific expertise should play the dominant role (implicitly or explicitly) in the President's decision about whom to select for such permanent or temporary positions. By adhering to professionally recognized scientific expertise in selection, the Administration, government agencies, and the American people will receive the best scientific knowledge and advice available when our nation formulates significant policy decisions. Such scientifically informed decisions can and should assure the continuation of America's prominent position within scientific, technological, and health research domains as well as protect America's international credibility and leadership within these areas. Accordingly, the ASA Council directs the ASA Executive Officer to take appropriate public actions to help ensure that scientific expertise is the primary consideration in such appointments, as a means to help protect the influence of America's critical scientific, technological, and health science enterprises.