March 13, 2020

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro
Chairwoman
Subcommittee on Labor, Health
and Human Services, Education,
and Related Agencies
2358-B Rayburn Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Tom Cole
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Labor, Health
and Human Services, Education
and Related Agencies
1016 Longworth Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairwoman DeLauro and Ranking Member Cole:

As you draft your Fiscal Year 2021 Labor, Health and Human Services, Education Appropriations bill, we request that you include $106.1 million in funding for International Education and Foreign Language Studies. This includes $95.7 million for Higher Education Act-Title VI and $10.4 million for Fulbright-Hays programs.

Title VI/Fulbright-Hays programs have had a tremendous impact on our nation over the years by developing a strong foundation in international education, research, and foreign language studies, especially in the less-commonly taught languages of U.S. strategic interest.

Multiple GAO reports have cited shortfalls of language and culture skills in the U.S. military and intelligence community, finding that our nation’s language deficit could threaten our priorities and missions around the globe. At the same time, growing security challenges in other issue areas such as global health, environment, food production, cybersecurity, and law enforcement increasingly depend on international knowledge and skills. Meanwhile, America’s business and their clientele are diversifying and globalizing their operations, requiring language skills and cultural knowledge to compete successfully in global markets.

The Commission on Language Learning of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, requested by Congress in 2014, released its final report on February 28, 2017. The data demonstrates that “by several measures, the United States has neglected languages in its educational curricula, its international strategies, and its domestic policies.” The Commission also found that the U.S. educational system is not fully prepared to meet the rapidly growing demands for professionals and educators with area, regional, international business and foreign language knowledge. Effective communication is the basis of international cooperation, and a strong national defense depends substantially on the ability of Americans to communicate and compete by knowing the languages and cultures of other countries.

Strong academic programs in critical foreign languages and intensive training in multi-disciplinary regional studies -- including socio-economic, cultural, security, and religious and business aspects, among others -- are vital to our national security and global economic competitiveness. But beyond the intensive curriculum development and related academic
programming resulting from these programs, Title VI resources make possible extensive outreach to K-12 classrooms, strong collaborations between four-year postsecondary institutions and community colleges, and strengthened ties between U. S. postsecondary institutions and international partners.

The various programs funded under this account serve to strengthen the nation's educational infrastructure in areas where the need grows greater by the day. We are thankful for your commitment to these programs and the increased funding provided in the prior fiscal year. We hope to build on this progress and urge $106.1 million for this critical international and foreign language education infrastructure. This is a small but vitally important investment in our nation's education, national security, and economic competitiveness.

Sincerely,

David Price
Rep. David Price
Member of Congress

Don Young
Rep. Don Young
Member of Congress

Donald S. Beyer Jr.
Member of Congress

Pramila Jayapal
Rep. Pramila Jayapal
Member of Congress

Rick Larsen
Rep. Rick Larsen
Member of Congress

Sean Casten
Rep. Sean Casten
Member of Congress

Jerrold Nadler
Rep. Jerrold Nadler
Member of Congress

Nydia Velázquez
Rep. Nydia M. Velázquez
Member of Congress

Seth Moulton
Rep. Seth Moulton
Member of Congress

Suzanne Bonamici
Rep. Suzanne Bonamici
Member of Congress

James P. McGovern
Member of Congress

Andy Kim
Rep. Andy Kim
Member of Congress

Bill Foster
Rep. Bill Foster
Member of Congress

John Yarmuth
Rep. John Yarmuth
Member of Congress
Rep. Adam Smith  
Member of Congress

Rep. Daniel W. Lipinski  
Member of Congress

Rep. Eliot L. Engel  
Member of Congress

Rep. Mark DeSaulnier  
Member of Congress

Rep. Ron Kind  
Member of Congress

Rep. Alcee L. Hastings  
Member of Congress

Rep. André Carson  
Member of Congress

Rep. Danny K. Davis  
Member of Congress

Rep. Peter A. DeFazio  
Member of Congress

Rep. Susan K. DelBene  
Member of Congress

Rep. David N. Cicilline  
Member of Congress

Rep. David Scott  
Member of Congress

Rep. Sheila Jackson Lee  
Member of Congress

Rep. Linda T. Sánchez  
Member of Congress

Rep. Jerry McNerney  
Member of Congress

Rep. James R. Langevin  
Member of Congress

Rep. Steve Cohen  
Member of Congress

Rep. Juan Vargas  
Member of Congress

Rep. Barbara Lee  
Member of Congress

Rep. Jahana Hayes  
Member of Congress

Rep. Dave Loebsack  
Member of Congress

Rep. Jimmy Panetta  
Member of Congress

Rep. Julia Brownley  
Member of Congress

Rep. Ann McLane Kuster  
Member of Congress