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

March 28, 2019

Dear Chairwoman DeLauro and Ranking Member Cole:

As you draft your Fiscal Year 2020 Labor, Health and Human Services, Education Appropriations bill, we request that you include $106 million in funding for International Education and Foreign Language Studies for Fiscal Year 2020. This includes $95.7 million for HEA-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. Unfortunately, Title VI and Fulbright-Hays programs have been weakened by recent budget reductions at the very time their importance has grown. Therefore, we strongly urge $106 million for these programs to begin restoring funding to their FY 2010 levels and build on the progress made to 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

Bill Foster
Rep. Bill Foster
Member of Congress

Peter A. DeFazio
Rep. Peter A. DeFazio
Member of Congress

Gwen Moore
Rep. Gwen Moore
Member of Congress

Steve Cohen
Rep. Steve Cohen
Member of Congress

Eleanor Holmes Norton
Rep. Eleanor Holmes Norton
Member of Congress

Alcee L. Hastings
Rep. Alcee L. Hastings
Member of Congress

Jerrold Nadler
Rep. Jerrold Nadler
Member of Congress

David N. Cicilline
Rep. David N. Cicilline
Member of Congress

Ron Kind
Rep. Ron Kind
Member of Congress

David Scott
Rep. David Scott
Member of Congress

Dave Loebsack
Rep. Dave Loebsack
Member of Congress
Rep. Andy Kim  
Member of Congress

Rep. Suzanne Bonamici  
Member of Congress

Rep. Ann McLane Kuster  
Member of Congress

Rep. Sean Casten  
Member of Congress

Rep. Jim Langevin  
Member of Congress

Rep. Jared Golden  
Member of Congress

Rep. Susan A. Davis  
Member of Congress

Rep. Brian Higgins  
Member of Congress

Rep. Julia Brownley  
Member of Congress

Rep. Tom O'Halleran  
Member of Congress

Rep. Raúl M. Grijalva  
Member of Congress

Rep. Rick Larsen  
Member of Congress

Rep. David Trone  
Member of Congress

Rep. Adriano Espaillat  
Member of Congress

Rep. Susan DelBene  
Member of Congress

Rep. Nydia M. Velázquez  
Member of Congress

Member of Congress

Rep. Seth Moulton  
Member of Congress

Rep. Ben McAdams  
Member of Congress

Rep. Earl Blumenauer  
Member of Congress

Rep. Elissa Slotkin  
Member of Congress

Rep. Mike Doyle  
Member of Congress

Rep. John Garamendi  
Member of Congress

Rep. Tulsi Gabbard  
Member of Congress