

COALITION FOR INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION

Promoting U.S. Global Competence

March 30, 2010

MEMORANDUM

TO: Members of the House Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education Appropriations

FROM: The Coalition for International Education

RE: FY 2011 Funding for International Education and Foreign Language Studies:

- The Higher Education Act, Title VI and Fulbright-Hays 102(b)(6)
- Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education
- Foreign Language Assistance Program

The undersigned organizations of the Coalition for International Education appreciate your continued leadership and support for international and foreign language education programs. We are pleased to present our views and funding recommendations for the programs noted above.

I. The Higher Education Act, Title VI and Fulbright-Hays 102(b)(6)

As the financial crisis shrinks our state, local and private educational resources, a significant federal boost in the nation's foundational programs for building U.S. global competence—Title VI and Fulbright-Hays—is urgent. **We recommend a total of \$176.8 million, a \$51 million increase over FY 2010. This includes \$153.8 million for Title VI-A&B—a \$45.4 million increase; \$19.8 million for Fulbright-Hays 102(b)(6)—a \$4.2 million increase; and \$3.2 million for the Institute for International Public Policy, Title VI-C—a \$1.3 million increase over FY 2010.** These programs must be strengthened in order to more effectively address shortages in the nation's pool of foreign language and area expertise and research; increase the numbers of Foreign Language and Area Studies (FLAS) fellowships; increase the numbers of American business personnel trained to compete globally; infuse an international and foreign language dimension into business and other professional and graduate education, undergraduate education, and K-12 teacher training and curriculum development; enhance citizen understanding of global issues; and increase the number of underrepresented minorities in international service.

Regional and global challenges, such as the global financial crisis, peacekeeping, counterinsurgency, environmental and health issues, underscore the nation's interdependency with the rest of the world. Successful global leadership and competitiveness require professional expertise coupled with foreign language skills, understanding of world areas, and the ability to work across cultures at home and overseas. Our educational system—from K-12 through professional education—is not fully prepared to expand international education for 21st century needs. Few students in the U.S. take foreign languages to the point of proficiency, or study abroad in countries other than Europe. Rising demand for expertise in critical languages and world areas is confronted with shortfalls in teachers and faculty. An infusion of new funding for Title VI/Fulbright-Hays would be a critical investment for the nation now.

II. Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education (FIPSE)

We support the President's request for an increase of \$2.1 million for the FIPSE International Consortia Programs. However, the request also proposes a \$6.7 million reduction in the Comprehensive Program. We urge Congress to continue support for growth in the Comprehensive Program as well. These programs fund innovations and reform in international and foreign language education, as well as cooperative grant programs with institutions overseas, including Canada, Mexico, Russia, Brazil, and the European Community.

III. Foreign Language Assistance Program (FLAP)

We recommend \$31.9 million, a \$5 million increase, for the Foreign Language Assistance Program in ESEA, Title V. The President proposes to eliminate FLAP as an individually funded program and consolidate it into a new authority called "Effective Teaching and Learning for a Well-Rounded Education" along with seven other programs in economics, history, civic education and the arts. The proposal is a step backwards in federal support for a critical national need, at a time of severe and growing shortages of Americans with foreign language skills in government, healthcare, law enforcement, business and many other professions. K-12 foreign language education requires a dedicated federal funding stream, since it provides a skill set needed by the nation for security and global economic competitiveness. Consolidating the program would make it subject to state and local educational agency priorities, which historically have not emphasized foreign language education.

Fewer than 18% of Americans reported speaking a language other than English in the last census, as opposed to 53% of Europeans. While many other nations—such as the European Union, China, and India--require their students to learn two or more languages, the U.S. is behind. Educating the 21st century workforce for a globally competitive economy and diverse society requires foreign language and cultural education. Learning a foreign language proficiently is best begun at an early age.

We believe a new and effective approach to meeting the need to improve K-12 foreign language education in partnership with institutions of higher education is on the horizon through HR 4065, "The Foreign Language Education Partnership Program Act." In the meantime, we agree with the Congressional approach of providing additional funding for K-12/higher education partnerships under FLAP until Congress considers the ESEA/America Competes Act reauthorization issues.

Thank you for considering our suggested funding levels. We believe our proposals to be a sound investment toward strengthening our nation's security and economic well being in this time of complex global challenges. We look forward to working with Subcommittee Members and staff.

Submitted by the following organizations:

Alliance for International Educational and Cultural Exchange
American Association of Community Colleges
American Association of State Colleges and Universities
American Council on Education

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American Councils for International Education: ACTR/ACCELS
American Political Science Association
American University of Beirut
Association of American Universities
Association for Asian Studies
Association for International Business Education and Research
Association of International Education Administrators
Association of Public and Land-Grant Universities
Association of Research Libraries
UNCF Special Programs
Consortium of Social Science Associations
Council of American Overseas Research Centers
Council of Directors of National Foreign Language Resource Centers
Council of Directors of National Resource Centers
Council for Opportunity in Education
Joint National Committee for Languages
Latin American Studies Association
Middle East Studies Association
National Association of Independent Colleges and Universities
National Humanities Alliance

cc: Subcommittee Staff