

AMERICAN COUNCIL ON EDUCATION



COALITION FOR INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION

April 21, 2009

MEMORANDUM

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

FROM: The Coalition for International Education

RE: FY 2010 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)

We strongly urge Congress to provide an infusion of new funding that restores Title VI and Fulbright-Hays programs to their historic levels, encourages strategic collaborations within and among educational institutions, and makes critical investments in the nation's future. **We recommend a total of \$176.8 million, a \$58 million increase over FY 2009. This includes \$153.8 million for Title VI-A&B—a \$51.5 million increase; \$19.8 million for Fulbright-Hays 102(b)(6)—a \$5.1 million increase; and \$3.2 million for the Institute for International Public Policy, Title VI-C—a \$1.4 million increase over FY 2009.** These programs must be strengthened to more effectively increase the nation's pool of foreign language and area expertise and research; 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. Funding also is needed to address new provisions and requirements mandated by the Higher Education Opportunity Act of 2008.

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 U.S. leadership in solving these problems requires 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. 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.

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

We urge Congress to continue support for growth in both the comprehensive and international consortia competitive programs within FIPSE. 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 \$31.3 million, a \$5 million increase, for the Foreign Language Assistance Program in ESEA, Title V. Less than 18% of Americans reported speaking a language other than English in the last census, as opposed to 53% of Europeans. Educating a workforce for a globally competitive economy and diverse society requires foreign language and cultural education. Learning a foreign language proficiently, especially the less commonly-taught languages, is best begun at an early age. However, a recent survey found that fewer elementary and middle schools are teaching a foreign language compared to a decade ago. Additional FLAP funding should encourage more effective K-12 foreign language programs, especially at the elementary levels.

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 proposed amendments to FLAP under the reauthorization of ESEA. We agree with the Congressional approach of providing additional funding for K-12/higher education partnerships under FLAP until Congress revisits this issue in ESEA.

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:

African Studies Association
Alliance for International Educational and Cultural Exchange
American Association for the Advancement of Slavic Studies
American Association of Community Colleges
American Association of State Colleges and Universities
American Council on Education
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 Jesuit Colleges and Universities
Association of Research Libraries
UNCF Special Programs
Consortium of Social Science Associations

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Council of American Overseas Research Centers
Council of Directors of National Foreign Language Resource Centers
Council of Directors of National Resource Centers
Council of Graduate Schools
Council for Opportunity in Education
Joint National Committee for Languages
Latin American Studies Association
Middle East Studies Association
NAFSA: Association of International Educators
National Association of Independent Colleges and Universities
National Association of State Universities and Land-Grant Colleges
National Humanities Alliance
Thurgood Marshall College Fund

cc: Subcommittee Staff