

COALITION FOR INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION

Promoting U.S. Global Competence

April 27, 2021

The Honorable Charles E. Schumer
Majority Leader
U.S. Senate
S-221, U.S. Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Minority Leader
U.S. Senate
S-230, U.S. Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Majority Leader Schumer and Minority Leader McConnell,

As you consider comprehensive legislation to address 21st century security and economic challenges posed by the People's Republic of China and other nations, the undersigned organizations strongly support inclusion of enhancements to Title VI of the Higher Education Act, as proposed in the bipartisan ***Advancing International and Foreign Language Education Act***.

Today the nation's security, its economic growth, and its success in navigating increasingly complex global challenges hinge on our ability to understand and engage with diverse cultures at home and around the world. New challenges require a far wider and deeper range of knowledge about the world, its cultures and many more of its languages, from high-level expertise to a globally competent workforce and informed citizenry.

High-level expertise continues to be of vital importance to our defense, intelligence, and diplomatic communities in order to cope with expanding threats in multiple world regions. At the same time, growing security challenges in other issue areas such as global health, environment, law enforcement, food production, cyber security and more, increasingly rely on professional level foreign language abilities, cultural and regional knowledge, and experience abroad. The COVID-19 global pandemic has made this trend ever more evident. Meanwhile, U.S. employers seek more graduates with international business, language and cultural competencies to help restore and strengthen the U.S. economy in today's uncertain, evolving global markets.

As the most comprehensive and multifaceted federal program in international education, we believe Title VI is the federal government's foundational vehicle to address this 21st century human resource issue, which too often is on the margins of our nation's education policy discussions. The ***Advancing International and Foreign Language Education Act*** reauthorizes Title VI with enhancements that provide a leap forward to ensuring that American graduates have the international competencies for success in confronting these new workforce challenges. While addressing the nation's critical and expanding needs for fluency in foreign languages, world regions and international business, the bill also provides students with innovative opportunities to obtain the international experience and skills in growing demand across a wide range of professional and technical fields impacting our global engagement, security and competitiveness.

To achieve these goals, the bill focuses on the urgent need in FY 2022 to restore the federal investment in Title VI after severe appropriations reductions in FY 2011, followed by a decade of flat funding. Title VI is the only federal program that supports multiple international education strategies combined with interdisciplinary programs focused on all world regions and more than 130 languages. With restored funding at a time when needed most, key foreign language, regional studies, international business, research and education abroad infrastructures and capacity would be replenished and interdisciplinary programs would increase.

Since the National Defense Education Act of 1958, Title VI has been a key federal-university partnership that plays a catalytic role in international and foreign language education, leveraging a large amount of additional nonfederal resources. It maintains an unparalleled national capacity in teaching and resources, without which most of the less commonly taught languages and world regions of strategic interest would not be taught in our schools and colleges on a regular basis. It provides extensive outreach and collaboration among all levels of educational institutions, government agencies, and corporations. Other complementary international education activities in the Departments of Defense, State and Commerce, which have more targeted priorities, depend on the Title VI educational infrastructure and resources to further their strategic goals.

In sum, Title VI is an ever more urgent and essential strategy for developing the American capabilities and leadership needed for addressing our contemporary global challenges. We believe enhancing and reinvesting in this partnership within legislation that strengthens our global engagement and competitiveness overall is timely, and strongly urge its inclusion.

Thank you for your consideration of our request.

Submitted by the following 34 organizations:

African Studies Association
Alliance for International Exchange
American Association of Community Colleges
American Association of State Colleges and Universities
American Council of Learned Societies
American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages
American Councils for International Education
American Historical Association
American Political Science Association
American Society for Engineering Education
Association for Asian Studies
Association for International Business Education and Research
Association for Slavic, East European, and Eurasian Studies
Association of American Universities
Association of International Education Administrators
Association of Jesuit Colleges and Universities
Association of Public and Land-Grant Universities
Association of Research Libraries
Center for Global Education at Asia Society
Consortium of Social Science Associations

Council of American Overseas Research Centers
Council of Directors of National Resource Centers
Council of Graduate Schools
The Forum on Education Abroad
Joint National Committee for Languages
Latin American Studies Association
Middle East Studies Association
Modern Language Association
NAFSA: Association of International Educators
National Association of Independent Colleges and Universities
National Coalition for History
National Council for Languages and International Studies
National Humanities Alliance
North American Small Business International Trade Educators Association

cc: The Honorable Patty Murray
Chairman
Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions
428 Senate Dirksen Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Richard Burr
Ranking Member
Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions
428 Senate Dirksen Office Building
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