

COALITION FOR INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION

Promoting U.S. Global Competence

May 10, 2011

MEMORANDUM

TO: The Honorable Daniel K. Inouye, Chairman
The Honorable Thad Cochran, Ranking Member
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. Senate

The Honorable Tom Harkin, Chairman
The Honorable Richard Shelby, Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, Education
and Related Agencies Appropriations
U.S. Senate

Members and Staff of the Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services,
Education and Related Agencies Appropriations
U.S. Senate

FROM: The Coalition for International Education

RE: FY 2012 Funding for International Education and Foreign Language Studies:
• The Higher Education Act, Title VI and Fulbright-Hays 102(b)(6)
• Foreign Language Assistance Program (FLAP)

The undersigned organizations of the Coalition for International Education note with appreciation the longtime Congressional support for the U.S. Department of Education's premier international and foreign language education programs noted above. Today we strongly urge the Appropriations Committee to safeguard these programs by providing funding for them that is equal to their FY 2010 funding levels in the FY 2012 appropriations bill. Maintaining a strong federal role in these programs is critical to supporting our nation's long-term national security, global leadership, economic competitiveness capabilities, as well as mutual understanding and collaboration around the world. Successful U.S. engagement in these areas, at home or abroad, relies on Americans with global competence, including foreign language skills and the ability to understand and function in different cultural environments.

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

We recognize the difficult decisions Congress and the Administration faced on education spending cuts for the remainder of FY 2011, and now face for FY 2012. **However, we are deeply concerned over the severe and disproportionate \$50 million or 40% cut to the Title VI/Fulbright-Hays programs under H.R. 1473, the final FY 2011 Continuing Resolution agreement.** Title VI/Fulbright-Hays contain fourteen small “pipeline” programs, twelve of which are under \$20 million. A cut of this magnitude will have a devastating impact, including possible elimination of FY 2011 funding for some.

We strongly urge that the FY 2012 appropriations restore funding for the fourteen existing programs to the FY 2010 level of \$125.881 million. This total includes \$108.360 million for Title VI-A&B; \$15.576 million for Fulbright-Hays 102(b)(6); and \$1.945 million for the Institute for International Public Policy, Title VI-C.

The last decade has witnessed numerous GAO and other reports, including Congressional hearings, warning that the number of Americans with foreign language and cultural skills and expertise does not match our growing strategic needs at home or abroad. The National Academy of Sciences (NAS) reported in 2007: *“A pervasive lack of knowledge about foreign cultures and foreign languages in this country threatens the security of the United States as well as its ability to compete in the global marketplace and produce an informed citizenry.”*

“Title VI/Fulbright-Hays serve as our nation’s foundational programs for building U.S. global competence.” (NAS) They are the federal government’s most comprehensive programs supporting the development of high quality *national capacity* in international, foreign language and business education and research. Title VI/Fulbright programs support activities to strengthen our capabilities throughout the educational pipeline, from K-12 outreach through graduate education and advanced research, with emphasis on the less commonly-taught languages and world areas, such as China, Russia, India and the Muslim world. They produce U.S. experts, prepare Americans for the global workplace, and generate knowledge on the foreign languages and business, economic, political, social, cultural and regional affairs of other countries and world areas. Grantees also engage in extensive outreach and collaboration across the educational spectrum, and with business, government, the media and the general public. Title VI-funded centers are relied upon for their expertise by federal agencies, corporations, and local school districts. Over the last two decades Congress has adjusted and expanded programs and priorities to reflect a rapidly changing world, moving beyond Cold-War needs to adapt to the challenges of the 21st century.

Title VI/Fulbright grants provide incentives that stimulate additional investment from public and private sources, and the universities themselves. However, most of these university-based programs would be eliminated without Title VI/Fulbright support, especially when state and local governments and institutions of higher education also are financially strapped. Significantly cutting or eliminating programs in this carefully designed “program pipeline” would seriously weaken our nation’s international education capacity, which has taken decades to build and would be impossible to easily recapture.

This federal-higher education partnership pays dividends that vastly outweigh the small 0.2% investment within the Department of Education's budget. It has produced such renowned graduates as Secretary of Defense Robert Gates, General John Abizaid, former Ambassador to Russia James Collins, advisor to six Secretaries of State Aaron David Miller, and NYTimes Pulitzer prize-winning journalist Anthony Shadid, and it has supported the President's Export Initiative through training of small and mid-size businesses to engage in emerging markets and create jobs.

After September 11, 2001, Congress began a decade of enhancements to Title VI/Fulbright-Hays because of the sudden awareness of an urgent need to improve the nation's in-depth knowledge of world areas, transnational issues and fluency of U.S. citizens in foreign languages. Unfortunately these gains and many program enhancements on strategic world areas will be eliminated unless funding is restored to FY 2010 levels.

II. Foreign Language Assistance Program (FLAP)

Funded at \$26.928 million in the FY 2011 Continuing Resolution, the Foreign Language Assistance Program (FLAP) is the only Department of Education program supporting the development of foreign language programs at the K-12 levels. A portion of the funding (\$11.5 million) is set aside for 5-year grants to local educational agencies that work in partnership with one or more institutions of higher education to establish or expand articulated programs of study in languages critical to U.S. national security. **We support continuation of funding at this level in FY 2012.**

Learning a foreign language proficiently is best begun at an early age. At a time of severe and growing shortages of Americans with foreign language skills in government, healthcare, law enforcement, business and many other professions, our K-12 educational system is not prepared to expand international and foreign language education for 21st century needs. The federal role in stimulating K-12 foreign language education reform requires a dedicated funding stream, since it provides a skill set needed by the nation for security and global economic competitiveness.

The United States has fallen behind other nations in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) indicators, but historically has never caught up with other nations in language and cultural skills. Less than 20% of Americans reported speaking a language other than English in census bureau surveys, 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. lags behind.

Now more than ever, Congress must maintain a strong and steady U.S. Department of Education leadership role in partnership with our educational institutions to ensure the nation's students have access to high-quality international and foreign language education to meet national needs. **We urge the committee to restore these programs in FY 2012 to their FY 2010 funding levels to insure a sound federal investment toward strengthening our nation's security and economic well being in this era of dangerous and complex global challenges.**

Submitted by the following organizations:

African Studies Association
Alliance for International Educational and Cultural Exchange
American Anthropological Association
American Association of Community Colleges
American Association of State Colleges and Universities
American Council on Education
American Councils for International Education: ACTR/ACCELS
American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages
American Historical Association
American Political Science Association
American University of Beirut
American Folklore Association
Asia Society
Association of American Universities
Association of International Education Administrators
Association of Public and Land-grant Universities
Association of Research Libraries
Association for Asian Studies
Association for International Business Education and Research
Association for Slavic, East European, and Eurasian Studies
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 of Graduate Schools
Council for Opportunity in Education
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 Council for the Social Studies
National Humanities Alliance
North American Small Business International Trade Educators Association
UNCF Special Programs