

COALITION FOR INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION

Promoting U.S. Global Competence

April 29, 2015

The Honorable Thad Cochran, Chairman
The Honorable Barbara Mikulski, Ranking Member
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Roy Blunt, Chairman
The Honorable Patty Murray, Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human
Services, Education, and Related Agencies
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

RE: FY 2016 Funding for International Education and Foreign Language Studies:
The Higher Education Act–Title VI and Fulbright-Hays 102(b)(6)

Dear Senate Committee on Appropriations Leadership:

The undersigned organizations of the Coalition for International Education appreciate your support for the U.S. Department of Education’s international and foreign language education programs. HEA-Title VI and Fulbright-Hays are the nation’s foundational programs for developing and maintaining high-quality expertise and research on foreign languages and cultures, international markets, world regions and global issues. Federal financial incentives are the lynchpin for ensuring instruction in the less-commonly taught languages and regions of U.S. strategic interest.

As you consider the Senate FY 2016 Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies funding bill, we strongly urge your support for strengthening funding for these vital programs, to at least the President’s request level. The President’s budget proposes \$76.164 million for International Education and Foreign Language Studies, a \$4 million increase over the FY 2015 level of \$72.164 million. This proposed level includes \$67.103 million for HEA-Title VI, a \$2 million increase over FY 2015, and \$9.061 million for Fulbright-Hays overseas programs, a two million increase over FY 2015.

As you know, HEA-Title VI and Fulbright-Hays funding has been severely reduced by \$53.7 million, 43% since FY 2010. As a consequence, the FY 2014 multi-year grant competition results for Title VI and Fulbright-Hays were cut significantly, some as high as 50%, at a time when the need for American capabilities and leadership for solving global challenges only grows.

To revitalize the network of educational programs Title VI and Fulbright-Hays support, we recommend that additional Title VI funding be devoted to increasing opportunities for students and faculty in regional/global, foreign language and international business studies and research, as well as education abroad and outreach to K-12 and underrepresented populations. We also urge reinstating funding in FY 2016 for the longstanding Title VI–International Research and Studies (IRS) program, the only source of research funding of its kind in the U.S. Finally, we urge additional funding be directed to Fulbright-Hays doctoral dissertation abroad and advanced critical language study overseas, programs essential to achieving high levels of language and cultural fluency.

Funding for activities covered by HEA-Title VI and Fulbright-Hays is critical to United States national security and global economic competitiveness in our increasingly interconnected and interdependent world. Recent surveys of U.S. corporations, government agencies, and academic institutions indicate all are experiencing rapidly growing demands for employees with a wide range of international skills. For example, in one recent [survey](#) of U.S. corporations, more than 85% of the firms state that their overall business would increase with international expertise on their staff, while nearly 70% indicate that foreign language skills and an appreciation for cross-cultural differences are the most important requirements at the entry level. With this surge in demand across diverse sectors, a renewed federal investment in these historically bipartisan education programs continues to be most timely and vital to America's future.

We thank you again for your support and consideration of our views.

Submitted by the following organizations:

African Studies Association
Alliance for International Educational and Cultural Exchange
American Association of Community Colleges
American Council on Education
American Council of Learned Societies
American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages
American Councils for International Education
American Political Science Association
American University of Beirut
Asia Society
Association for Asian Studies
Association for International Business Education and Research
Association of International Education Administrators
Association of Jesuit Colleges and Universities
Association for Slavic, East European, and Eurasian Studies
Consortium of Social Science Associations
Council of American Overseas Research Centers
Council of Directors of National Resource Centers
The Forum on Education Abroad
Joint National Committee for Languages
Latin American Studies Association
Middle East Studies Association
Modern Language Association
National Association of Independent Colleges and Universities
National Council for Languages and International Studies
National Humanities Alliance
North American Small Business International Trade Educators Association
Social Science Research Council

cc: Members and Staff of the Senate Subcommittee on Labor, HHS, Education,
and Related Agencies Appropriations