

Congress of the United States

House of Representatives

Washington, DC 20515–3302

[[DATE]]

The Honorable Robert Aderholt
Chair
Subcommittee on Labor, Health
and Human Services, Education
and Related Agencies
2358-B Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Labor, Health
and Human Services, Education
and Related Agencies
1036 Longworth Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chair Aderholt and Ranking Member DeLauro:

As you draft your Fiscal Year 2025 Labor, Health and Human Services, Education Appropriations bill, we request that you include \$91 million in funding for International Education and Foreign Language Studies. This includes \$79.9 million for the Higher Education Act-Title VI and \$11 million for Fulbright-Hays programs, a 6% increase adjusting for combined FY 2023 and FY 2024 inflation.

Title VI/Fulbright-Hays programs have helped our nation develop a strong foundation in international education, research, and world language studies, especially in the less-commonly taught languages that hold special strategic interest for our national defense and diplomatic presence around the world.

As shortfalls of language and cultural skills continue to persist in the U.S. military, diplomatic, and intelligence communities, our nation’s language deficit could threaten our priorities and missions around the globe. In addition, a 2023 Center for Strategic and International Studies report on strengthening the Centers for Disease Control’s global mission emphasized the need for international staff to undergo training in language and cultural skills and CDC is now focused on building a global workforce with world language skills and cultural experience. U.S. businesses and their clientele are diversifying and continuing to globalize their operations, requiring a workforce with language skills, cultural knowledge, and international experience to compete successfully in global markets. Meanwhile, an expanding range of sectors—including health, environment, food production, science, technology, engineering, energy, transportation, financial systems, and law enforcement—increasingly require workers to possess international knowledge.

Unfortunately, the U.S. continues to lag behind other nations in the percentage of citizens who know a second language. The Modern Language Association’s 2021 language enrollment census found a 16.6% decline in language enrollments at U.S. colleges and universities since 2016, the highest decline since the census began in 1958. Data revealed a nearly 70% correlation between language enrollments and Title VI funding between 1998 – 2023.

Strong academic programs in critical world languages and intensive training in multi-disciplinary regional studies—including socio-economic, cultural, security, and religious and business

aspects—are vital, and robust federal funding is essential to ensuring that students from all backgrounds can access these high-quality programs. Beyond the intensive curriculum development and related academic programming, Title VI resources make possible extensive outreach to K-12 classrooms, strong collaborations between four-year postsecondary institutions and community colleges, and strengthened ties between U.S. postsecondary institutions and international partners.

The various programs funded under this account serve to strengthen our nation’s educational infrastructure in areas where the need grows greater by the day. We are thankful for your commitment to these programs and the increased funding provided in FY 2020 through FY 2023. We hope to build on this progress and provide \$91 million for the Title VI/Fulbright-Hays programs, which would continue reversing a decade of sequestration and help restore the programs to their Fiscal Year 2010 funding levels, adjusted for inflation. This is a small but vitally important investment in our nation’s education, national security, and economic competitiveness.

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