

**COALITION FOR
INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION**
Promoting U.S. Global Competence

May 7, 2010

MEMORANDUM

TO: Senator Tom Harkin
Chairman, Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee
U.S. Senate

Senator Mike Enzi
Ranking Member, Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee
U.S. Senate

FROM: The Coalition for International Education

RE: Reauthorization of ESEA: International and Foreign Language Education

Thank you for the opportunity to provide our views on the upcoming reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. We are a coalition of over 30 national educational organizations interested in U.S. Department of Education programs that promote U.S. global competence (www.usglobalcompetence.org).

We write to urge the strengthening of federal support for K-12 international and foreign language education in ESEA. We are concerned that President Obama's "Blueprint for Reform" proposes to eliminate the Foreign Language Education Program (ESEA, Title V-Part D-Subpart 9) as an individually funded program and consolidate it into a new authority called "Effective Teaching and Learning for a Well-Rounded Education" along with numerous other programs in economics, history, civic education and the arts. We believe this approach to be a step backwards in federal support for a critical national need, at a time of severe and growing shortages of Americans with foreign language skills in government, healthcare, law enforcement, business and many other professions. K-12 foreign language education requires a dedicated federal funding stream, since it provides a skill set needed by the nation for security and global economic competitiveness. Consolidating the program would make it subject to competition with other state and local educational agency priorities, which historically have not emphasized foreign language education.

We urge the committee's support for maintaining a separately funded K-12 foreign language education program in ESEA that includes the attached bill, HR 4065, the "Foreign Language Education Partnership Program Act" introduced last fall by

Rep. Rush Holt (D-NJ). Representing a consensus position of K-12 and higher education foreign language communities, and endorsed by 75 organizations (list attached), the bill provides for model programs of K-12/higher education partnerships that would transform K-12 foreign language education in the U.S. The bill requires articulated foreign language instruction from grades K-12, with the goal of graduating high school students with an advanced level of proficiency. Programs also would expand understanding and knowledge of the cultures in which the foreign languages are spoken. By reforming the K-12 foreign language pipeline, the new legislation would support current efforts under the Higher Education Act-Title VI as well as other federal programs at the undergraduate and graduate levels to produce students with superior levels of proficiency and expertise needed by government, education and other sectors.

Continuing and expanding the separate funding stream for K-12 foreign language education will provide our students with opportunities to develop the global competence needed for success in the 21st century. Please find attached further background information. We are eager to work with the committee on this important initiative.

Submitted by the following organizations:

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 Councils for International Education: ACTR/ACCELS
Association of American Universities
Association for International Business Education and Research
Association of International Education Administrators
Consortium of Social Science Associations
Council of Directors of National Foreign Language Resource Centers
Council of Directors of National Resource Centers
Council for Opportunity in Education
Joint National Committee for Languages
Latin American Studies Association
Middle East Studies Association
NAFSA: Association of International Educators
National Humanities Alliance

cc: HELP Committee Staff
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