Support Foreign Language Learning in FY 2021 Appropriations
*This is a programmatic request*

Dear Colleague:

Please join us in urging the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education to include a funding level of $106.1 million for International Education and Foreign Language Studies for Fiscal Year 2021. This includes $95.7 million for Higher Education Act-Title VI and $10.4 million for Fulbright-Hays programs.

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

The various programs funded under this account serve to strengthen the nation’s educational infrastructure in areas where the need grows greater by the day. The future national security and economic well-being of the United States will depend substantially on the ability of its citizens to communicate and compete by knowing the languages and cultures of other countries.

Unfortunately, the United States lags in the percentage of its citizens who have some knowledge of a second language as compared to other nations. To address these gaps, we need strong academic programs in critical foreign languages and intensive training in multi-disciplinary regional studies that are vital to our global economic competitiveness, national security, and other key priorities.

We hope that you will join us in requesting that $106.1 million be provided for Title VI/ Fulbright-Hays International Education and Foreign Language programs in the FY21 Labor, Health, and Human Services, and Education Appropriations bill. For more information, please contact Nora Blalock (Price) at nora.blalock@mail.house.gov and Alex Ortiz (Young) at alex.ortiz@mail.house.gov. The deadline to sign-on is COB on March 9, 2020.

Sincerely,

[Signatures]

Rep. David Price
Member of Congress

Rep. Don Young
Member of Congress
March 13, 2020

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro
Chairwoman
Subcommittee on Labor, Health
and Human Services, Education,
and Related Agencies
2358-B Rayburn Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Tom Cole
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Labor, Health
and Human Services, Education
and Related Agencies
1016 Longworth Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairwoman DeLauro and Ranking Member Cole:

As you draft your Fiscal Year 2021 Labor, Health and Human Services, Education Appropriations bill, we request that you include $106.1 million in funding for International Education and Foreign Language Studies. This includes $95.7 million for Higher Education Act-Title VI and $10.4 million for Fulbright-Hays programs.

Title VI/Fulbright-Hays programs have had a tremendous impact on our nation over the years by developing a strong foundation in international education, research, and foreign language studies, especially in the less-commonly taught languages of U.S. strategic interest.

Multiple GAO reports have cited shortfalls of language and culture skills in the U.S. military and intelligence community, finding that our nation’s language deficit could threaten our priorities and missions around the globe. At the same time, growing security challenges in other issue areas such as global health, environment, food production, cybersecurity, and law enforcement increasingly depend on international knowledge and skills. Meanwhile, America’s business and their clientele are diversifying and globalizing their operations, requiring language skills and cultural knowledge to compete successfully in global markets.

The Commission on Language Learning of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, requested by Congress in 2014, released its final report on February 28, 2017. The data demonstrates that “by several measures, the United States has neglected languages in its educational curricula, its international strategies, and its domestic policies.” The Commission also found that the U.S. educational system is not fully prepared to meet the rapidly growing demands for professionals and educators with area, regional, international business and foreign language knowledge. Effective communication is the basis of international cooperation, and a strong national defense depends substantially on the ability of Americans to communicate and compete by knowing the languages and cultures of other countries.

Strong academic programs in critical foreign languages and intensive training in multi-disciplinary regional studies -- including socio-economic, cultural, security, and religious and business aspects, among others -- are vital to our national security and global economic
competitiveness. But beyond the intensive curriculum development and related academic programming resulting from these programs, 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 the 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 the prior fiscal year. We hope to build on this progress and urge $106.1 million for this critical international and foreign language education infrastructure. This is a small but vitally important investment in our nation’s education, national security, and economic competitiveness.

Sincerely,

Rep. David Price
Member of Congress

Rep. Don Young
Member of Congress