

# COALITION FOR INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION

*Promoting U.S. Global Competence*

April 19, 2011

The Honorable Arne Duncan  
Secretary of Education  
U.S. Department of Education  
400 Maryland Avenue, SW  
Washington, DC 20202

Dear Secretary Duncan:

The undersigned organizations of the Coalition for International Education write with deep concern over reports of a severe, \$50 million or 40% cut to the Department of Education's International Education and Foreign Language Studies programs—Title VI and Fulbright-Hays—in the final FY 2011 Continuing Resolution agreement. The Coalition is a group of over 30 organizations with interest in promoting U.S. global competence, and in particular the Department of Education's international education programs.

We recognize the difficult decisions faced on education spending cuts for the remainder of FY 2011, and the upcoming FY 2012 deliberations. Under H.R. 1473, it is our understanding that you have discretion to decide final funding levels for programs not specifically cited for cuts in the bill, such is the case for Title VI and Fulbright-Hays. It is our hope that you will have the latitude to administer these education cuts proportionately and equitably.

In making these tough choices, we urge your consideration of the important federal role played by international and foreign language education programs in supporting our nation's long-term national security, global leadership, economic competitiveness, 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.

Unfortunately, as a number of reports and Congressional hearings over the last decade have demonstrated, the number of Americans with these skills and expertise does not match our growing strategic needs at home or abroad. As 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."***

The U.S. has fallen behind other nations in STEM indicators, but historically has never caught up with other nations in language and cultural skills. Now more than ever, our nation's students must have access to a high-quality international education and skills-training needed to compete and collaborate in the rapidly changing global economy.

***“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, utilized by education, government and business sectors. Title VI/Fulbright programs support activities to strengthen our capabilities throughout the educational pipeline, from K-12 outreach through graduate education and advanced research. Grantees engage in extensive outreach and collaboration across the educational spectrum, and with business, government, the media and the general public. 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 21<sup>st</sup> century.

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

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 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.

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 enhance the nation’s in-depth knowledge of world areas, transnational issues and fluency of U.S. citizens in foreign languages. A 40% cut now would eliminate the gains made since FY 2002, and in turn have an adverse long-term impact on our national interests.

In developing your spending plan for the remainder of FY 2011, it is our hope that you will provide the maximum amount possible for these programs. We request a meeting with you as soon as possible to discuss the Department’s priorities on international and foreign language education. Your staff may feel free to contact Miriam A. Kazanjian, Consultant to the Coalition for International Education ([makazanjian@earthlink.net](mailto:makazanjian@earthlink.net)) to schedule a meeting.

Thank you for your consideration of our views and for your support of international and foreign language education.

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 Association of Teachers of Slavic and East European Languages  
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  
Archaeological Institute of America  
Asia Society  
Association of American Geographers  
Association of American Universities  
Association of Art Museum Directors  
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  
The Forum on Education Abroad  
German Studies Association  
Joint National Committee for Languages  
Latin American Studies Association  
Middle East Studies Association  
Modern Language Association  
NAFSA: Association of International Educators  
National Council for the Social Studies  
National Humanities Alliance  
North American Small Business International Trade Educators Association  
Rural Sociological Society  
Social Science Research Council  
UNCF Special Programs

cc: Undersecretary Martha Kanter  
Assistant Secretary Eduardo Ochoa  
Assistant Secretary Carmel Martin  
Deputy Assistant Secretary Andre Lewis  
Assistant to the President for Education Roberto Rodriguez, WH DPC  
Senior Advisor for Education Zakiya Smith, WH DPC