



COALITION FOR
INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION
Promoting U.S. Global Competence

January 26, 2010

The Honorable Harry Reid
Majority Leader
United States Senate

Dear Senator Reid:

On behalf of the Alliance for International Educational and Cultural Exchange and the Coalition for International Education, we urge you to reject Senator Tom Coburn's amendment to H.J. Res. 45 that would rescind \$120 billion in federal spending. As associations representing nongovernmental exchange organizations and institutions of higher education committed to increasing U.S. expertise and engagement with the world, we are concerned that this amendment would significantly diminish the reach and impact of our nation's international efforts.

Senator Coburn's amendment identifies various international education programs of the Departments of State, Education, Defense, and the National Science Foundation as 'duplicative.' In fact these programs are complementary. Different programs reach American citizens at different stages of their academic careers: important early exposure for undergraduates; deep expertise for graduate students through ongoing language, area studies, and research opportunities; and specialized intensive training to reach very high levels of fluency. These modestly funded and highly cost-effective programs, which represent less than 0.05 per cent of the combined budgets of their agencies, are largely concentrated in the most critical and least commonly taught languages; they foster and sustain badly needed national capacity that otherwise would not be developed. One need only look at any day's headlines to appreciate our need to engage more broadly and effectively with China, India, Russia, and the Muslim world. Restricting or eliminating this carefully designed 'program pipeline' will reduce our nation's capacity to do so, and have an adverse long-term impact on our national security.

In an increasingly interdependent world, our nation needs to strengthen language and international affairs expertise among Americans in virtually every field – government, business, academia, medicine, law, and scientific and technical disciplines – to support America's continuing global leadership. The Coburn amendment would mandate just the opposite outcome.

We urge you and your colleagues to reject this amendment, and appreciate your consideration of this important issue.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Michael McCarry".

Michael McCarry
Alliance for International Educational and Cultural
Exchange

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Miriam A. Kazanjian".

Miriam A. Kazanjian
Coalition for International Education

Submitted on behalf of the following organizations:

America-Mideast Educational and Training Services (AMIDEAST)	American Association of Community Colleges
American Councils for International Education: ACTR/ACCELS	American Association of State Colleges and Universities
American Council on Education	American Institute for Foreign Study, Inc.
American Political Science Association	American University of Beirut
Association for Asian Studies	Association for International Business Education and Research
Association for International Practical Training	Association of International Education Administrators
Association of American Universities	Association of Research Libraries
Association of Public and Land-Grant Universities	Consortium of Social Science Associations
Concordia Language Villages	Council of Directors of National Foreign Language Resource Centers
Council for Opportunity in Education	Council of American Overseas Research Centers
Council of Directors of National Resource Centers	Council on International Educational Exchange
Educational Testing Service	Forum on Education Abroad
Institute of International Education	IREX: International Research & Exchanges Board
Joint National Committee for Languages	LASPAU: Academic and Professional Programs for the Americas
Latin American Studies Association	Meridian International Center
Middle East Studies Association	NAFSA: Association of International Educators
National Association of Independent Colleges and Universities	United Negro College Fund Special Programs Corporation

The Alliance for International Educational and Cultural Exchange is an association of 77 U.S.-based nongovernmental organizations with nearly 8000 staff and 1.25 million volunteers across the United States that conduct exchange programs of all types.

The Coalition for International Education is a group of over 30 national higher education organizations, which share an interest in U.S. Department of Education programs and initiatives that promote U.S. global competence.