

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,

Michael McCarry

Alliance for International Educational and Cultural

Exchange

Miriam A. Kazanjian

Coalition for International Education

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Submitted on behalf of the following organizations:

America-Mideast Educational and Training

Services (AMIDEAST)

American Association of Community Colleges

American Councils for International Education: Ameri

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.