

COALITION FOR INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION

Promoting U.S. Global Competence

April 6, 2017

The Honorable Paul Ryan, Speaker of the House
The Honorable Nancy Pelosi, Minority Leader
United State House of Representatives

The Honorable Mitch McConnell, Majority Leader
The Honorable Chuck Schumer, Minority Leader
United States Senate

The Honorable Rodney Frelinghuysen, Chairman
The Honorable Nita M. Lowey, Ranking Member
Committee on Appropriations
United States House of Representatives

The Honorable Thad Cochran, Chairman
The Honorable Patrick Leahy, Vice Chairman
Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate

The Honorable Tom Cole, Chairman
The Honorable Rosa DeLauro, Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Labor, Health & Human
Services, Education and Related Agencies
United States House of Representatives

The Honorable Roy Blunt, Chairman
The Honorable Patty Murray, Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Labor, Health & Human
Services, Education and Related Agencies
United States Senate

Dear House and Senate, and Respective Appropriations Committee Leadership,

As you consider the uncompleted **FY 2017** appropriations and begin consideration of the **FY 2018** appropriations for the various programs within the purview of the Labor, Health and Human Services, Education and Related Agencies Subcommittee, **the undersigned organizations urge you to reject the Administration's proposal to reduce or eliminate funding for the U.S. Department of Education's International Education and Foreign Language Studies Programs.** Although representing just 0.1% of the Department of Education's discretionary budget, these bipartisan programs are vital to strengthening our economic competitiveness, national security and international leadership, and should be preserved and funded robustly.

For FY 2017, we urge the Congress to adopt the House bill provision, which provides the FY 2016 funding levels for the **Higher Education Act-Title VI and Fulbright Hays 102(b)(6): \$72.2 million, including \$65.1 million for Title VI and \$7.1 million for Fulbright-Hays.** The Senate bill provides the FY 2016 funding level for Title VI as well, but severely reduces by \$4.983 million or 69% the long-standing Fulbright-Hays overseas program, to \$2.2 million. If the Fulbright-Hays reduction were enacted, no further competitions would take place in FY 2017 and any future funding would be in doubt. The critical role the Fulbright-Hays programs play for students in advancing language and cultural proficiency levels through overseas immersion opportunities would be severely diminished or eliminated.

For FY 2018, we urge **support for \$78.5 million, an increase of \$6.5 million in funding** over the current FY 2017 Continuing Resolution, including **\$70.5 million for Title VI and \$8 million for Fulbright-Hays.** While Title VI and Fulbright-Hays sustained a 43% reduction since FY 2011, reports and studies show that the demand for the international skills and knowledge these multi-faceted programs produce are growing by the day across employment sectors. In a 2014 survey, 85% of 850 U.S. corporate leaders responded that their business would increase with more international expertise on staff. A recent GAO report found that more than 30% of the State Department's language positions in Africa, the Near East and South/Central Asia

are filled by Foreign Area Officers who do not have the required language proficiency levels. Demands are increasing for a workforce with international, cultural and language skills in such other areas as STEM, agriculture, medicine, nursing, law, cyber security, aviation administration and more. Yet, reports indicate the educational pipeline at all levels is facing shortages of the foreign language and world regional expertise required to address the rising demand, including a recent Congressionally requested report from the American Academy of Arts & Sciences. The report recommends an increase in funding for Title VI and Fulbright-Hays in order to support a 21st century education strategy that “promotes broad access, values international competencies, and nurtures deep expertise in world languages and cultures.”

Created in the Eisenhower Administration and reformed over time to meet shifting global geopolitical and economic challenges, Title VI together with Fulbright-Hays programs are the *foundation* that ensures a U.S. educational infrastructure capable of producing America’s leadership for international engagement. Many graduates, such as Secretary of Defense (Ret.) Robert Gates, go on to careers in the government including at the Departments of Defense, Homeland Security, State, and Commerce, as well as NASA, NSA, FBI, CIA and USAID, among others. Without this federal/university partnership, the steady supply of experts on the less commonly taught languages and world areas of strategic interest would not be replenished on a regular basis if dependent on State funding, university endowments, foundation grants or institutional support alone. Nor would there be collaborative outreach activities to K-16 educational institutions, business, government, the media, and underrepresented populations that multiply the reach of these small but effective programs.

Multiple federal agencies with more targeted priorities depend on the Title VI/Fulbright-Hays educational infrastructure to further their respective strategic goals. Examples include the U.S. Army’s Foreign Area Officer Program (FAO), DOD Language Flagship Programs, and the Department of Commerce Export Initiative. While the Department of Education also works to ensure that Title VI and Fulbright-Hays programs prioritize the targeted language and world regional resource needs of other federal agencies, the independent scholarship and diverse perspectives on world regional and international business issues these programs enable are often sought by the Congress and federal agencies.

We appreciate the difficult budgetary decisions ahead as the FY 2017 and FY 2018 appropriations processes move forward, but we strongly believe that budget eliminations or reductions should not be made at the expense of strategic national interests. **Our nation faces complex and challenging economic competitiveness, national security, and global issues for the foreseeable future. Disinvesting in the international education programs that help produce the human resources and knowledge needed to address these issues is not the way forward.** We hope the House and Senate will avoid further reduction of Title VI and Fulbright-Hays below their respective FY 2016 funding levels in FY 2017, and begin restoring their capacity in FY 2018.

Thank you for your consideration of our views. We would be pleased to provide any further information the Congress may need.

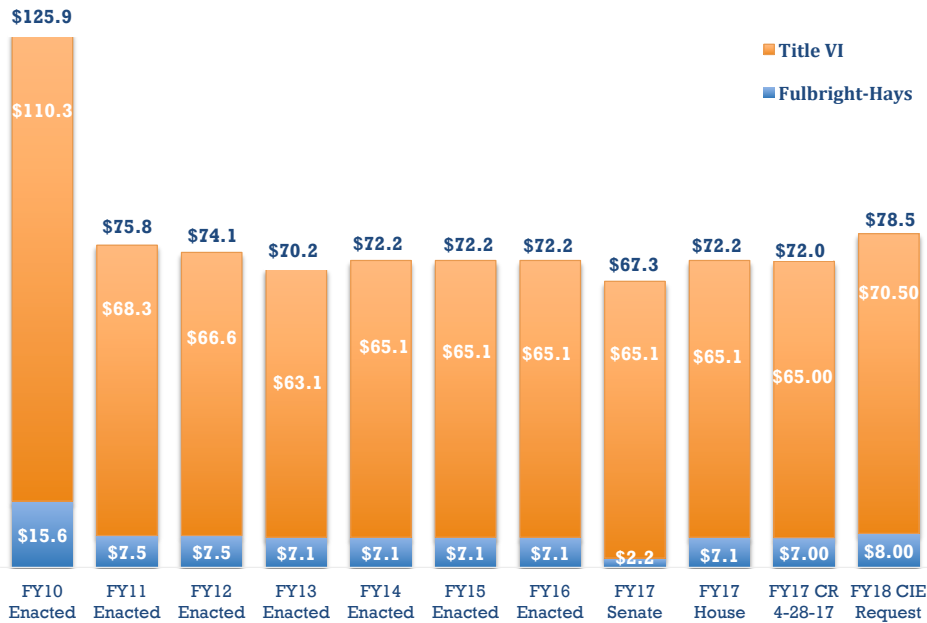
Submitted by the following organizations:

African Studies Association
Alliance for International Exchange
American Association of Community Colleges
American Council of Learned Societies
American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages
American Councils for International Education
American Historical Association
American Political Science Association
American University in Cairo
American University of Beirut
Asia Society

- Association for Asian Studies
- Association for International Business Education and Research
- Association of International Education Administrators
- Association of Jesuit Colleges and Universities
- Association for Slavic, East European, and Eurasian Studies
- Consortium of Social Science Associations
- Council of American Overseas Research Centers
- Council of Directors of National Resource Centers
- The Forum on Education Abroad
- Joint National Committee for Languages
- Latin American Studies Association
- Middle East Studies Association
- Modern Language Association
- NAFSA: Association of International Educators
- National Association of Independent Colleges and Universities
- National Coalition for History
- National Council for Languages and International Studies
- National Humanities Alliance
- North American Small Business International Trade Educators Association
- Social Science Research Council

cc: Members and Staff of the House and Senate Appropriations Committees
 Enc: HEA-Title VI and Fulbright-Hays Funding Chart, FY 2010 – FY 2018

U.S. Department of Education Title VI & Fulbright-Hays, FY 2010-18 *In Millions USD*



Coalition for International Education, March 2017