

COALITION FOR INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION

Promoting U.S. Global Competence

November 3, 2021

The Honorable Miguel Cardona
Secretary of Education
U.S. Department of Education
400 Maryland Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20202

Dear Secretary Cardona,

The undersigned organizations write in regard to the renewed commitment to international education expressed by the Departments of Education and State through the **Joint Statement of Principles** and **your extended remarks at this year's EducationUSA Forum**. The Coalition for International Education, a diverse group of national educational associations that promotes and works to strengthen U.S. global competence, applauds this welcome commitment. We strongly support a coordinated strategy on international education among the Departments of Education, State, and other federal agencies to address our 21st century national needs and global challenges.

In this context, today we write to urge the Department of Education to prioritize and strengthen its international and foreign language education and research role under HEA-Title VI and Fulbright-Hays 102(b)(6). As you know, the nation's security, its economic growth, and its success in navigating increasingly complex global challenges hinge on our ability to understand and engage with diverse cultures at home and around the world. New challenges require a far wider and deeper range of knowledge about the world, its cultures and many more of its languages, from high-level expertise to a globally competent workforce and informed citizenry.

While these skills continue to be of vital importance to our defense, intelligence, and diplomatic communities around the world, growing global issues increasingly impact our homeland as well. Whether it's global health, environment, food production, cyber security, law enforcement, immigration and more, meeting our challenges increasingly relies on foreign language abilities, regional knowledge, cultural understanding, and experience abroad. In the case of COVID-19, for example, the need to communicate, cooperate and understand globally has had life or death implications. Meanwhile, U.S. employers seek more graduates with international business, language and cultural competencies to help restore and strengthen the U.S. economy in today's uncertain, evolving and competitive global markets. What's more, the diverse cultural perspectives that international education instills in our students promote mutual understanding within our culturally diverse U.S. population.

As the most comprehensive and multifaceted federal programs in international education, we believe HEA-Title VI and Fulbright-Hays 102(b)(6) are the federal government's foundational vehicles to address this 21st century human resource issue. Title VI is the only federal program that supports multiple international education strategies, including—

foreign languages, area and regional studies, education abroad, international business, linkages with overseas institutions, visiting scholars, teacher training, research and more—combined with interdisciplinary programs focused on all world regions and more than 130 languages. It maintains an unparalleled national capacity in teaching and resources, without which most of the less commonly taught languages and world regions of strategic interest would not be taught in our schools and colleges on a regular basis. It provides extensive outreach and collaboration among all levels of educational institutions (K-12 through higher education), government agencies, and corporations. Other complementary international education activities in the Departments of Defense, State and Commerce, which have more targeted priorities, depend on the Title VI educational infrastructure and resources to further their strategic goals.

As you know, these programs suffered a disproportionate \$53 million reduction beginning in FY 2011 followed by a decade of flat funding, all due to budgetary restrictions. Today we strongly urge the Department of Education to prioritize restoration of this vital federal investment in your FY 2023 budget request to at least their FY 2010 funding levels as adjusted by inflation. This well-grounded and justified restoration would enable and energize resumption of the significant investment and capacity developed under these critical programs in the decade immediately after 9/11. Key foreign language, regional studies, international business, research, and education abroad infrastructures and capacity must be replenished, interdisciplinary programs increased, and more outreach and access to quality international education for a broad range of underserved institutions and populations enabled. To achieve these goals, we also urge the Department to ensure commensurate staffing needs are met in the International and Foreign Language Education Office (IFLE).

We hope that the Department, and the Administration overall will see these invaluable international and foreign language education programs as an ever more urgent and essential strategy for developing the American capabilities and leadership needed for addressing our contemporary challenges at home and around the globe.

Thank you for your consideration of our request. We would be pleased to provide any additional information or collaboration that you and your staff would like moving forward.

Submitted by the following 34 organizations:

African Studies Association
Alliance for International Exchange
American Association of Community Colleges
American Council of Learned Societies
ACTFL: American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages
American Councils for International Education
American Historical Association
American Political Science Association
American Society for Engineering Education
Association for Asian Studies
Association for International Business Education and Research
Association for Slavic, East European, and Eurasian Studies
Association of American Universities
Association of International Education Administrators
Association of Jesuit Colleges and Universities

Association of Public and Land-Grant Universities
Association of Research Libraries
Center for Global Education at Asia Society
Consortium of Social Science Associations
Council of American Overseas Research Centers
Council of Directors of National Resource Centers
Council of Graduate Schools
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: Maureen A. McLaughlin, Director of International Affairs, Office of the Secretary
James Kvaal, Undersecretary of Education
Roberto Rodríguez, Assistant Secretary for Planning, Evaluation and Policy Development
Michelle Asha Cooper, Acting Assistant Secretary for Postsecondary Education
Cheryl Gibbs, Senior Director, International and Foreign Language Education