

COALITION FOR INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION

Promoting U.S. Global Competence

December 11, 2017

The Honorable Virginia Foxx
Chairwoman
Committee on Education and the Workforce
U.S. House of Representatives

The Honorable Robert C. “Bobby” Scott
Ranking Member
Committee on Education and the Workforce
U.S. House of Representatives

The Honorable Brett Guthrie
Chairman
Subcommittee on Higher Education
and Workforce Development
U.S. House of Representatives

The Honorable Susan A. Davis
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Higher Education
and Workforce Development
U.S. House of Representatives

Dear Committee on Education and the Workforce Leadership,

As you prepare for full committee consideration of **HR 4508, the PROSPER Act**, we write to express our appreciation for reauthorizing **Title VI–International Education Programs**, the successful federal-university partnership that serves as the foundation for international education in the U.S. Today more than ever, our nation’s successful global engagement, security and economic competitiveness depend on the ability of our citizens to engage with diverse cultures at home and around the globe. Title VI must continue its vital role in strengthening the educational pipeline in this respect, but we believe that HR 4508 would seriously narrow its scope and reach.

We greatly appreciate the reauthorization of five currently funded Title VI programs¹ that support the development of our nation’s deep expertise in world regions, global issues, international business and foreign languages, especially the less commonly taught languages of strategic importance. However, we are concerned that six other Title VI programs are eliminated without replacement, especially two currently funded programs, the Undergraduate International Studies and Foreign Language Program (UISFL) and the American Overseas Research Centers (AORC). These repeals would significantly reduce opportunities for millions of students across the nation.

Specifically, the UISFL program provides seed funding to develop and carry out new programs that strengthen and improve undergraduate instruction in international studies and foreign languages, also focusing on the less commonly taught languages and world regions for which funding is rarely available. A large number of UISFL grantees are community colleges, small four-year colleges/universities, and Minority-Serving Institutions. UISFL annually funds over 50 colleges and universities and impacts an estimated 20,000 students, as well as faculty and K-12 teachers who would be denied funding opportunities should the committee repeal UISFL.

¹ National Resource Centers, Foreign Language and Area Studies Fellowships, Language Resource Centers, International Research and Studies, and Centers for International Business Education and Research.

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On the other end of the higher education spectrum, the AORC program funds consortia of over 400 U.S. colleges and universities to establish advanced research centers in strategic areas of U.S. interest around the world. For more than two decades, the AORCs have served Title VI as a primary vehicle through which American scholars and students carry out overseas research vital to our understanding of other cultures and provide overseas venues for language and cultural training.

Along with the program eliminations, HR 4508 reduces the authorization of appropriations for Title VI by \$3.6 million below the FY 2017 funding level for each year in the life of the authorization, FY 2019 - FY 2024. Title VI already has sustained a severe 41% funding reduction since FY 2011. The committee bill would prohibit any recuperation in the immediate future.

Our Title VI reauthorization proposals are based on the findings of a 2014 policy research conference, [*Internationalization of U.S. Education in the 21st Century*](#), which demonstrated the expanding U.S. human resource needs for global competence at home and abroad, and the lack of preparedness of our educational institutions to graduate students with the international competencies and experiences required for the global workforce. Given the magnitude of the task at hand, a Congressionally requested [*Report of the AAAS Commission on Language Learning in the U.S.*](#) confirmed these findings and also urged strengthening of Title VI as part of a 21st century education strategy. We believe HR 4508 falls short in addressing these vital issues.

We urge the committee to focus on the international and foreign language educational challenges facing the nation with the bipartisan support for Title VI these programs have enjoyed for nearly six decades. **Therefore, as an alternative, we encourage bipartisan support for HR 4491, the Advancing International and Foreign Language Education Act, which incorporates our recommendations. We believe HR 4491 is the way forward for U.S. international education.**

We would be pleased to provide any information the committee may need.

Thank you for your consideration of our views.

Submitted by the following organizations:

African Studies Association
American Association of Community Colleges
American Council of Learned Societies
American Council on Education
American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages
American Councils for International Education
American Historical Association
American Political Science Association
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 of Research Libraries
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

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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 Education and the Workforce Committee