

COALITION FOR INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION

Promoting U.S. Global Competence

October 24, 2019

The Honorable Robert C. “Bobby” Scott
Chairman
Committee on Education and Labor
U.S. House of Representatives

The Honorable Virginia Foxx
Ranking Member
Committee on Education and Labor
U.S. House of Representatives

The Honorable Susan A. Davis
Chairwoman
Subcommittee on Higher Education
and Workforce Investment
U.S. House of Representatives

The Honorable Lloyd K. Smucker
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Higher Education
and Workforce Investment
U.S. House of Representatives

Dear Committee on Education and Labor Leadership,

The thirty-one undersigned organizations express our strong support for the reauthorization of Title VI–International Education Programs included in the College Affordability Act. Program improvements included in the bill provide a leap forward to ensuring American graduates have the international competencies for success in the 21st century workforce. While addressing the nation’s critical and expanding needs for deep expertise in foreign languages, world regions and international business, the amendments also provide students with new and innovative opportunities to obtain international skills in growing demand across a wide range of professional and technical fields.

Each reauthorization of the Higher Education Act finds the United States facing new global challenges. Today U.S. security, economic growth, and success in navigating increasingly complex global issues, all hinge on our ability to understand and engage with diverse cultures at home and around the world. Our 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. High-level expertise continues to be of vital interest to our defense, intelligence and diplomatic communities with expanding threats in multiple world regions. At the same time, our nation’s economic competitiveness, along with new global security challenges in health, environment, law enforcement, food production, cyber security and more, increasingly rely on professional level language abilities, cultural and regional knowledge, and experience abroad.

The College Affordability Act’s Title VI addresses these findings, which are well-documented by a 2014 policy research conference, [*Internationalization of U.S. Education in the 21st Century: The Future of International and Foreign Language Studies*](#), and confirmed by the Congressionally requested 2017 [*Report of the AAAS Commission on Language Learning in the U.S.*](#) and a 2019 ACTFL report [*Making Languages Our Business: Addressing Foreign Language Demand Among U.S. Employers*](#).

As the most comprehensive and multifaceted federal program in international education, we believe Title VI is the federal government's foundational vehicle to address this 21st century human resource issue, which too often is on the margins of our nation's education policy discussions. Title VI is the only federal program that supports multiple international education strategies 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. 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.

Title VI programs also enable universities to expand access to underserved institutions of higher education and populations, provide high-quality programs and resources for K-12 schools, and conduct extensive outreach to government and the private sector.

In sum, the proven federal catalytic role in international and foreign language education through Title VI continues to be an essential strategy for developing—in partnership with our educational institutions—the American capabilities and leadership needed for addressing our contemporary global challenges. This role would be continued, strengthened, and improved under the College Affordability Act's Title VI amendments.

We urge the committee to continue the longstanding tradition of bipartisan support for Title VI, and look forward to working with you to ensure its continued success.

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 Society for Engineering Education
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
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

The College Affordability Act–Title VI, International Education, Page 3 of 3

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 of the House Education and Labor Committee