

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

April 21, 2026

The Honorable Shelley Moore Capito  
Chair  
Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor,  
Health and Human Services, Education  
and Related Agencies  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Tammy Baldwin Ranking  
Member  
Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor,  
Health and Human Services, Education  
and Related Agencies  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chair Capito and Ranking Member Baldwin:

As you draft the subcommittee's fiscal year (FY) 2027 bill, we request that you include robust funding for Title VI and Fulbright-Hays International Education and Foreign Language Studies programs at the Department of Education.

The longstanding bipartisan HEA-Title VI and Fulbright-Hays programs have helped our nation develop a strong foundation in international education, research, and world language studies. Strong academic programs in critical foreign languages, especially in the less-commonly taught languages, and intensive training in area and international studies hold special strategic interest for our national defense and diplomatic presence around the world. This exposure ensures a deep understanding of the socio-economic, cultural, security, and religious underpinnings of today's international conflicts. These programs are also vital to our economic success as our students prepare to compete in an increasingly global market.

Title VI and Fulbright-Hays are the federal government's most comprehensive international education programs. They play a significant role in developing a steady supply of graduates with deep expertise and high-quality research on foreign languages and cultures, international markets, world regions, and global issues.

Unfortunately, due to significant funding reductions and program eliminations over the past decade, the Title VI/Fulbright-Hays educational infrastructure has suffered. This has resulted in fewer nationally recognized resource centers, undergraduate and doctoral fellowships, training opportunities for students and teachers, and outreach activities to government and business. Investment will allow us to build on decades of progress at a time when the need for American capabilities and leadership for solving global challenges grows every day.

As shortfalls of language and cultural skills continue to persist in the U.S. military, diplomatic, and intelligence communities, our nation's language deficit will threaten our priorities and missions around the globe. Simultaneously, U.S. businesses and their clientele are continuing to globalize their operations, requiring a workforce with language skills, cultural knowledge, and international experience to compete successfully in global markets. A recent national survey of 1,200 U.S. companies doing business internationally found that 96% agreed that having more international expertise on their staff would lead to increased business. Over 90% agreed that language and cross-cultural knowledge are needed by both professional

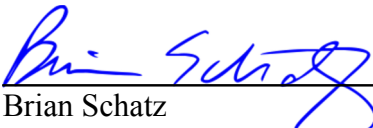
and line manager staff.<sup>1</sup>

Multiple federal agencies with complementary international education programs—such as the Departments of Defense, State, and Commerce, as well as our intelligence agencies—depend on the comprehensive infrastructure and resources of Title VI/Fulbright-Hays to further their respective strategic goals. While the Department of Education works to ensure that their programs prioritize the targeted language and world regional resource needs of these agencies, the independent scholarship and diverse perspectives on world regional and international business issues these programs enable are often sought by all branches of the federal government.

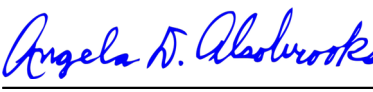
As the foundation for internationalizing U.S. higher education, this federal-university partnership ensures our nation's educational capacity and deep knowledge about all world regions, international business, and over 200 foreign languages, and at all levels of education. Without these programs, the 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, and the media that multiply the reach of these small but effective programs.


While FY 2020 through FY 2023 saw increases in funding for Title VI and Fulbright-Hays programs, they have yet to be fully replenished since their reduction in FY 2011. We must make sure that any budget cuts are not made at the expense of strategic national interests, and strongly urge you to provide robust funding for these programs in FY 2027. At a time when our national security, economic competitiveness, and global engagement challenges demand increased linguistic, regional, and cultural competencies, investment in these world-class programs continues to be critical to America's future.

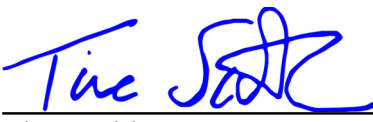
Sincerely,


  
Brian Schatz  
United States Senator

  
Todd Young  
United States Senator

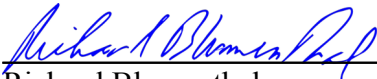
  
Angela D. Alsobrooks  
United States Senator

  
Alex Padilla  
United States Senator


  
Tina Smith  
United States Senator


  
Jeffrey A. Merkley  
United States Senator


<sup>1</sup> Centers for International Business Education and Research, "U.S. Companies Rely on International Markets Now and in the Future" (unpublished study, 2025).

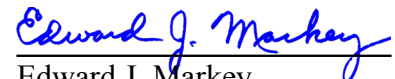
  
Richard Blumenthal  
United States Senator


  
Ben Ray Lujan  
United States Senator

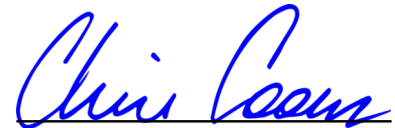
  
Sheldon Whitehouse  
United States Senator

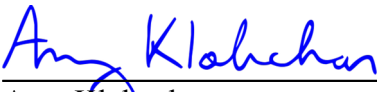
  
Mazie K. Hirono  
United States Senator

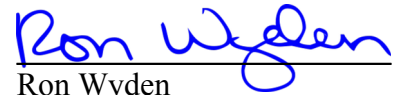
  
Michael F. Bennet  
United States Senator


  
Edward J. Markey  
United States Senator

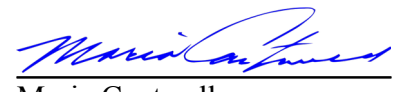
  
Chris Van Hollen  
United States Senator


  
Christopher A. Coons  
United States Senator


  
Amy Klobuchar  
United States Senator


  
Ron Wyden  
United States Senator

  
Jack Reed  
United States Senator

  
Maria Cantwell  
United States Senator

  
Bernard Sanders  
United States Senator

  
Raphael Warnock  
United States Senator

  
Adam B. Schiff  
United States Senator

  
Elissa Slotkin  
United States Senator

*Dick Durbin*

Richard J. Durbin

United States Senator