

Restore and Sustain Federal Investment in International Education



Ask: We urge Congress to defend and fund vital international education and exchange programs at the Departments of State and Education

The United States' national security, economic competitiveness, and global leadership are all advanced by the international education and exchange programs of the Departments of State and Education. These congressionally-authorized programs—which have received bipartisan support in Congress for decades—are currently imperiled by funding cuts, withdrawn funds, and staff layoffs.

International education and exchange programs are in the best interests of the American people. The United States needs a globally competent workforce with the foreign language and cross-cultural skills required to lead in business, cybersecurity, international diplomacy, and research. **The Education Department's Title VI and Fulbright-Hays programs** ensure American students graduate with that expertise, especially in foreign languages and world areas that are strategically important to our national defense, diplomatic engagement, and global economic competitiveness.

The future of these programs is currently threatened by department layoffs, including the total elimination of staff at the **Office of International and Foreign Language Education**, the abrupt cancellation of FY25 appropriated funds by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB), and zeroed out funding for these programs in the president's FY26 Budget Request.

The educational and cultural exchange programs funded through the State Department's **Bureau of Education and Cultural Affairs (ECA)** have been core pillars of American foreign policy for decades. They are time-tested cost-effective programs that provide domestic students with the skills they need to be successful in competitive global markets and strengthen U.S. global leadership.

ECA programs have been plagued by the unpredictable release of appropriated funds. Funding for more than 20 programs included in the final FY 2025 appropriations legislation, such as the **IDEAS Program, the Kennedy-Lugar Youth Exchange and Study Program** and **the Mandela Washington Fellowship for Young African Leaders Initiative**, has been withheld recently by OMB.

Currently, only ten percent of U.S. college graduates study abroad. Continued, reliable federal investment in international education and exchange is essential to ensure U.S. college graduates are equipped with the global experience they need to enhance the safety, security, and prosperity of our country.

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