

COALITION FOR INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION

Promoting U.S. Global Competence

December 10, 2021

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker of the House
U.S. House of Representatives
H-232, U.S. Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy
House Republican Leader
U.S. House of Representatives
H-204, U.S. Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Speaker Pelosi and Republican Leader McCarthy,

We are pleased the House and Senate have agreed to begin conferencing the *United States Innovation and Competition Act (USICA) of 2021*, comprehensive legislation to address 21st century security and economic challenges posed by the People’s Republic of China and other nations. **In this context, the undersigned organizations write to express our strong support for inclusion in the final Act of Section 6121 of USICA, “Reauthorization of International Education Programs Under Title VI of the Higher Education Act of 1965.”**

Today 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 program in international education, we believe HEA-Title VI is the federal government’s foundational vehicle to address this 21st century human resource issue. The bipartisan Senate passed *United States Innovation and Competition Act* reauthorizes Title VI with enhancements that provide a leap forward to ensuring that American graduates have the international competencies for success in confronting these new

workforce challenges. While addressing the nation's critical and expanding needs for fluency in foreign languages, world regions and international business, the bill also provides students with innovative opportunities to obtain the international experience and skills in growing demand across a wide range of professional and technical fields impacting our global engagement, security and competitiveness.

To achieve these goals, the bill's reauthorization focuses on the urgent need in FY 2022 and beyond to restore the federal investment in Title VI after severe appropriations reductions in FY 2011, followed by a decade of flat funding. 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. With the reauthorization amendments and restored funding at a time when needed most, key foreign language, regional studies, international business, research and education abroad infrastructures and capacity would be replenished, interdisciplinary programs would increase, and more outreach and access to quality international education for a broad range of underserved institutions and populations would be enabled.

Since the National Defense Education Act of 1958, Title VI has been a key federal-university partnership that plays a catalytic role in international and foreign language education, leveraging a large amount of additional nonfederal resources. 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, corporations, and nonprofit organizations. 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.

In sum, Title VI is an ever more urgent and essential strategy for developing the American capabilities and leadership needed for addressing our contemporary global challenges. We believe enhancing and reinvesting in this partnership within legislation that strengthens our global engagement and competitiveness overall is timely, and strongly urge its inclusion.

Thank you for your continued support for these programs and consideration of our request.

Submitted by the following 35 organizations:

African Studies Association
Alliance for International Exchange
American Association of Community Colleges
American Association of State Colleges and Universities
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 for Slavic, East European, and Eurasian Studies
Association of American Universities

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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: The Honorable Robert C. "Bobby" Scott
Chairman
Committee on Education and Labor
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Virginia Foxx
Ranking Member
Committee on Education and Labor
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515