

June 1, 2007

Dear Congressman \_\_\_\_\_,

Congressman Holt has recently amended the Elementary and Secondary Education Act to establish a Partnership Program in Foreign Languages, Bill H.R. 2111. I am writing to ask that you support and/or co-sponsor this bill. The purposes of H. R. 2111 are to provide incentives for model programs that address the needs for developing, strengthening, and expanding the teaching and learning of foreign languages and foreign cultures in U. S. elementary and secondary schools.

These incentives will be used:

- 1) to design programs and teaching strategies according to best practices recognized by the field and available research
- 2) to develop curriculum materials based on an articulated framework designed to bring students to an advanced level or proficiency by grade 12
- 3) to recruit students and teachers from heritage populations
- 4) to carry out teacher in-service and pre-service professional development programs, including summer institutes, that support the model programs.

The incentives may also be used:

- a) to develop and enhance nationally recognized assessments for K-12 Foreign Language programs
- b) to provide scholarships to recruit new teachers and to encourage practicing teachers to take advantage of the professional development opportunities
- c) to provide opportunities for maximum foreign language exposure for students domestically, including immersion environments in the classroom, summer experiences, and academic support, as well as study-abroad opportunities
- d) to provide the possibility for multiple entry points for studying the foreign language
- e) to carry out activities to integrate foreign languages into the school curriculum and to generate whole-school collaboration
- f) to carry out activities to encourage community involvement, especially with respect to heritage communities
- g) to incorporate effective and innovative uses of technology to enhance student learning
- h) to develop certification programs at State level, especially for the less commonly taught languages
- i) to obtain technical assistance in the development and implementation of the model program
- j) to recruit or appoint a language supervisor to oversee and coordinate the progress of the articulated foreign language program across grade levels

According to the National Research Council in 2007, a pervasive lack of knowledge about foreign cultures and languages in this country threatens the security of the United States, as well as its ability to compete in the global marketplace.

According to the National Research Council in 2007, early language learning in elementary and secondary schools is key to establishing a pipeline of students who can eventually reach a high enough level of proficiency in foreign language and culture to meet national needs.

According to the Committee of Economic Development in 2006, current efforts to develop language skills and knowledge of world regions at an early age are clearly inadequate to prepare high school graduates with the skills necessary for productivity and citizenship in an integrated global economy.

The American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages found that only 34% of the United States K-12 students were enrolled in foreign language classes in 2000. Furthermore, the length of time students spent studying languages at school has stagnated, so that many students reach only introductory levels of proficiency.

Research demonstrates that success lies not only in the number of years of learning, but also in having carefully sequenced, articulated programs of language learning across a child's school experience, requiring bridging the gaps between levels in foreign language education.

A survey of secondary school principals and foreign language teachers by the Center for Applied Linguistics in 1999 identified a shortage of foreign language teachers as a major impediment to greater foreign language learning.

Please add your support to H.R.2111. If you would like any additional information, I can be reached at:

Sincerely yours,

.....