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Congress of the United States

Chair
Select Intelligence Oversight Panel
Committee on Appropriations

Committee on Education
and Labor

Permanent Select Committee
on Intelligence

Committee on Natural Resources

May 6, 2011

The Honorable Arne Duncan
Secretary
U. S. Department of Education
400 Maryland Avenue, S. W.
Washington, D.C. 20202

Dear Secretary Duncan:

As you resolve the issues presented to the Department as a result of passage last month of the Fiscal 2011 Continuing Resolution, we are writing to strongly urge you to take all possible steps to ameliorate the impact of the "assumed" \$50,000,000 reduction in funding in the International Education and Foreign Language Studies account within the Office of Postsecondary Education. The assumed cut, which was not contained in the actual text of the spending bill, would amount to a 40 percent reduction in programs that, particularly at this juncture, are vital for the nation's "important economic, diplomatic, defense and national security interests" as noted in the Department's FY2012 budget documents.

The various programs funded under this account serve to strengthen the nation's educational infrastructure in areas where the need grows greater by the day. Strong academic programs in critical foreign languages and intensive training in multi-disciplinary regional studies including socio-economic, cultural, security, and religious aspects among others are vital to our national security. The assumed 40 percent cut would devastate these programs and could cripple our efforts for generations.

Programs funded under the International Education and Foreign Language Studies account are training experts that go on to serve in critical national security and foreign policy positions, to become business leaders who bolster our international competitiveness, and to become educators themselves, at every level, thereby sharpening the next generation's understanding of complex international issues.

It is important to keep in mind that, in addition to the intensive curriculum development and related academic programming that is possible thanks to these programs, the funding makes possible extensive outreach to K-12 classrooms, strong collaborations between four year postsecondary institutions and community colleges, and strengthened ties between U. S. postsecondary institutions and international partners. These partnerships

and activities would be difficult, if not impossible, to even maintain, let alone expand, with a 40 percent cut in federal support.

In particular, this funding is essential to training a cadre of individuals capable of fulfilling our nation's essential security and foreign policy needs in the years ahead. Finally, this funding supports essential academic and research fellowships for both faculty and students.

Simply put, with the challenges facing our nation today, this would be the wrong time to let these programs suffer budget cuts of the magnitude assumed in the Continuing Resolution. We urge you to use your discretion to address this important need and ensure adequate funding in Fiscal Year 2011 for the International Education and Foreign Language Studies account within the Office of Postsecondary Education.

Sincerely,



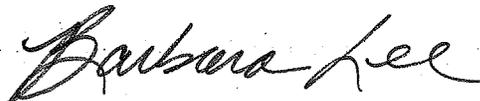
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