

Expand Foreign Language Education by Investing in Foreign Language Teachers

73 percent of the school districts in the United States need foreign language teachers

Cosponsor the Foreign Language Education Expansion Act

Dear Colleague,

Today, as global travel and communications technologies ensure that countries are increasingly connected economically and politically, the ability to deal with people from different cultural and linguistic backgrounds is an essential skill.

Because of this interconnectedness, and the important global security challenges that our country faces, the expansion of foreign language education in the United States should be a priority for all of us, particularly in critical languages like Chinese and Arabic. This critical language gap is even more apparent when one considers that more than 200 million children in China are studying English, a compulsory subject for all Chinese primary-school students. By comparison, only about 24,000 out of roughly 54 million elementary- and secondary-school students in the U.S. are studying Chinese.

Studies have also shown that the study of foreign languages provides students with tremendous academic advantages by helping them develop superior critical thinking and problem-solving skills, along with a deeper understanding of their own and other cultures. The ability to interact with other cultures will also be critical for the United States to remain competitive in the 21st century.

Unfortunately, today our country is faced with a severe shortage of foreign language teachers. In fact, according to a recent survey from Recruiting New Teachers, Inc., 73 percent of the school districts in the United States are in need of foreign language teachers. And the need for these teachers is only expected to grow as more and more states place greater emphasis on the study of foreign languages.

We will be introducing the Foreign Language Education Expansion Act, which would encourage more foreign language students and specialists to become teachers by making them eligible for the same amount of loan forgiveness

(\$17,500) that we currently offer math and science teachers who teach for five years in eligible Title I elementary and secondary schools. Offering such an incentive is a practical first step towards expanding the number of foreign language teachers in our schools and addressing the teacher shortage that is hurting foreign language education in the U.S.

Please join us in this effort to expand foreign language education so that our country can remain competitive and strong, educationally, economically, and globally. To sign on as an original cosponsor please contact Adam Miles at adam.miles@mail.house.gov or x5-2865 by COB Thursday, March 22.

Very truly yours,

/s

DENNIS MOORE
Member of Congress

/s

CHRISTOPHER SHAYS
Member of Congress

A BILL

To provide additional student loan forgiveness to teachers of foreign languages.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "Foreign Language Education Expansion Act".

SEC. 2. ADDITIONAL LOAN FORGIVENESS FOR TEACHERS OF FOREIGN LANGUAGES.

(a) FFEL LOANS.-Section 428J(c)(3)(A)(ii) the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1078-10(c)(3)(A)(ii)) is amended by striking "mathematics or science" and inserting "mathematics, science, or a foreign language".

(b) DIRECT LOANS.-Section 460(c)93)(A)(ii) of such Act (20 U.S.C. 1087j(c)(3)(A)(ii)) is amended by striking "mathematics or science" and inserting "mathematics, science, or a foreign language".

(c) NEW BORROWER ELIGIBILITY.-An individual who is a teacher of a foreign language shall not qualify under the amendments made by this section unless such individual is a new borrower (as such term is defined in section 103 of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1003)) on or after October 1, 2001.

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