

# Attention Florida World Language Teachers: TAKE ACTION NOW!

*When legislative offices receive multiple emails regarding the same topic, they take note and take action. So, write your letters right now and be the difference you want to see in the world of languages. It takes less than 5 minutes!*

## **ACTION STEPS ADVOCACY LETTER #1:**

1. Go to the following link and find the contact information for your state Senators and state/local Congressmen:  
**<http://capwiz.com/actfl/dbq/officials/>**
2. Once you find their contact information, click on “email” under their picture.
3. Choose “Compose your own letter”.
4. Fill in information:
  - Subject: Support HR 1966- Rush Holt’s Foreign Language Education Partnership Act
  - Select an issue = “Education” in drop-down menu
  - Copy and paste the following text (see tip for cutting and pasting which can be found below the text box on the website)
  - According to the National Research Council, a pervasive lack of knowledge about foreign cultures and foreign languages in this country threatens the security of the United States and our ability to compete in a global marketplace and produce informed citizens.
  - **Please support HR 1966 Foreign Language Education Partnership Act**, which would provide incentives for creating model programs of articulated, sequenced foreign language instruction K-12, with the goal of graduating high school students with an advanced level of proficiency.
5. Sign your name and complete your personal info.
6. Send message.

## **ACTION STEPS ADVOCACY LETTER #2:**

1. Repeat action steps 1-3 above.
2. Fill in information:
  - Subject: Support Request for Florida Seal of Biliteracy
  - Select an issue: “Education” in drop-down menu
  - Copy and paste the following text (*see tip for cutting & pasting, found below the text box on the website*)

As Florida’s international business market grows, so does the need for employees with bilingual, biliterate and intercultural skills. To achieve this, we need to strengthen our current foreign language programs by supporting HR 1966, the Foreign Language Education Partnership Act, but also, we need to offer opportunities and incentives for students to excel and demonstrate the aforementioned skills.

To this end, I would like to **propose the establishment of a State Seal of Biliteracy Program** to recognize high school graduates who have attained a high level of proficiency in one or more languages in addition to English, as measured through the state End of Course Exam, AP, IB or Cambridge exams. By using these test scores, there would be no cost to the state/district. Our vision is to help students recognize the value of their academic success as well as meet the economic and business needs of Florida. For more information or to ask clarifying questions, please contact me directly or the Florida Foreign Language Association at [www.ffla.us](http://www.ffla.us).
3. Sign your name and complete your personal info.
4. Send message.

**RUSH HOLT**  
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<http://holt.house.gov>



## Congress of the United States

Committee on Natural Resources  
Ranking Member, Energy and  
Minerals Subcommittee

Committee on Education and  
the Workforce

Founder and Co-Chair,  
Research & Development Caucus

May 8, 2013

### Improving Foreign Language Skills, Improving our Competitiveness and National Security

#### Cosponsor the Foreign Language Education Partnership Act

**Endorsed by:** American Translators Association, American Association of Teachers of Spanish and Portuguese, Michigan World Language Association, Southwest Conference on Language Teaching, New York State Association of Foreign Language Teachers, National Council of Organizations of Less Commonly Taught Languages, American Council of Teachers of Russian, Foreign Language Educators of New Jersey, Central States Conference on the Teaching of Foreign Languages, Florida Foreign Language Association, Foreign Language Association of Georgia, American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages, Center for Applied Linguistics, Southern Conference on Language Teaching, National Committee for Latin and Greek, Connecticut Council of Language Teachers, Wisconsin Association for Language Teachers, Massachusetts Foreign Language Association, Coordinators of Foreign Languages in Connecticut, International Association for Language Learning Technology

Dear Colleague:

According to the National Research Council, a pervasive lack of knowledge about foreign cultures and foreign languages in this country threatens the security of the United States and our ability to compete in the global marketplace and produce informed citizens. According to studies funded by the Department of Education, only 30 percent of American high school students are enrolled in foreign language classes, and only 25 percent of American elementary schools even offer foreign languages.

Research indicates that language education beginning in primary school is the best way to introduce a child to a foreign language. The length of time students spend studying languages at the K-12 level has stagnated, and 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 and articulated programs of language learning across a child's school experience.

**That is why I will soon reintroduce the Foreign Language Education Partnership Act (H.R. 1966 in the 112<sup>th</sup> Congress).** The bill amends the Foreign Language Assistance Program in NCLB-Title V to create a new K-12/higher education foreign language education partnership program. This legislation would provide incentives for creating model programs of articulated, sequenced foreign language instruction from K-12, with the goal of graduating high school students with an advanced level of proficiency.

**I ask that you cosponsor the Foreign Language Education Partnership Act to ensure we are developing foreign language skills at a young age and continuing them through college in order to protect our national security, compete in the global marketplace and produce informed citizens. If you have any questions about the bill, please contact Alicia Siani at [alicia.siani@mail.house.gov](mailto:alicia.siani@mail.house.gov).**

Sincerely,

**RUSH HOLT**  
Member of Congress

**FOREIGN LANGUAGE PARTNERSHIP ACT**  
**H.R. 1966 in the 112<sup>th</sup> Congress, to be introduced in the 113<sup>th</sup> Congress by Rep.**  
**Rush Holt (NJ-12) and Senator Lautenberg (NJ)**

**Bill Summary:**

- The bill amends the Foreign Language Assistance Program in NCLB-Title V to create a new K-12/higher education foreign language education partnership program.
- The legislation was developed in wide consultation with the K-12 and higher education foreign language communities, and represents a consensus on what new federal program is needed to improve foreign language education in grades K-12.
- The new legislation would provide incentives for creating and maintaining model programs of articulated, sequenced foreign language instruction from K-12, with the goal of graduating high school students with an advanced level of proficiency.
- Model programs must also include activities to expand understanding and knowledge of the historic, geographic, cultural, economic and other contextual factors of countries where the foreign language is spoken.
- Eligible partners include local and/or state education agencies and institutions of higher education, and may include businesses and nonprofit organizations.
- Any foreign language is eligible, but the Secretary of Education may establish priorities on languages critical to national needs.
- Grants may be provided initially for four years, and if success is demonstrated, may be followed by two additional 5-year grants.
- The first two years of an initial four-year grant may be used for planning and development for languages critical to national needs for which there are shortages of teachers, curriculum materials, and language assessments.
- Target proficiency levels must be identified and assessed at critical benchmarks.
- Program design and teaching strategies must be informed by best practices recognized by the foreign language field and available research.
- Funds may be used for a variety of activities, including, among others, the development of curriculum materials, in-service and pre-service teacher development, teacher recruitment, development or improvement of language assessments for K-12, study abroad and immersion opportunities for grades 9-12, and community involvement including heritage populations.
- Research and evaluation must be built into the model program, and data collected made available to the Secretary of Education and the public.
- Information on successful programs and practices will be widely disseminated by the Secretary of Education.
- \$50 million is authorized in the first fiscal year, and such sums for each succeeding fiscal year.

*Every year, we provide opportunities for students to excel and achieve academic advantages through programs like Advanced Placement, International Baccalaureate, and Cambridge. In our current academic and economic climate, we must now provide our students with a global advantage.*

## **The Logistics of the Seal of Biliteracy**

Synopsis As Introduced (originally adopted New York's version – but wording is being amended)

Amends the School Code. Establishes the State Seal of Biliteracy program to recognize public high school graduates who have attained a high level of proficiency in listening, speaking, reading, and writing in one or more languages in addition to English. Provides that the State Seal of Biliteracy shall be awarded by the State Board of Education beginning with the 2014-2015 school year. Provides that school district participation in this program is voluntary. Sets forth the purposes of the State Seal of Biliteracy. Sets forth requirements for the State Board of Education and participating school districts. Provides that no fee shall be charged to a pupil.

### **Legislature Goals:**

- Equitable, equal access
- Optional to school districts – not a mandate
- No/Low-cost to the state and those districts who adopt
- Incentivize language study to higher levels of proficiency
- State Board of Education management (low-maintenance – offer resources)

### **The Purpose(s) and Rationale**

**The purposes for instituting the Seal of Biliteracy are numerous:**

- To encourage students to study and become communicatively proficient in multiple languages in a way that offers equal access to both English and non-English speakers To certify attainment of biliteracy skills (using a data-based, nationally recognized assessment framework)
- To recognize the value of language and cultural diversity
- To provide employers with a method of identifying people with language and biliteracy skills to create more high school graduates prepared to compete in global job markets

- To provide universities with a method to recognize and give credit to applicants for attainment of high level skills in multiple languages
- To prepare students with 21<sup>st</sup> century skills that will benefit them in the labor market and the global society (21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills [www.p21.org](http://www.p21.org) include global literacy goals)
- To strengthen intergroup relationships and honor the multiple cultures and languages in a community.

A first step towards implementing a Seal of Biliteracy is to clarify your school, community, district or state's purpose for giving the awards and to articulate the "frame" and rationale that will resonate in your community. In one community, the emphasis on 21<sup>st</sup> century skills and jobs may resonate most deeply. In another, emphasizing learning respect for diversity and bringing students together across communities may be the most powerful rationale.

The specific purposes and rationale lead to the creation of a policy. It is important that a governing body create the award through policy. This is what gives it the weight of a statement by the schooling system that the skills of bilingualism have value. It is this process that provides the opportunity for a community to articulate how and why language diversity is important.

### **Global Purpose** (taken from [www.sealofbiliteracy.org](http://www.sealofbiliteracy.org) "What is the Seal?")

- The Seal of Biliteracy is an award given by a school, school district, or county office of education in recognition of students who have studied and attained proficiency in two or more languages by high school graduation. Our vision is to help students recognize the value of their academic success and see the tangible benefits of being bilingual.
- A Seal of Biliteracy is a statement by the school system that mastery of two or more languages is important. It encourages students to pursue biliteracy, honors the skills our students attain, and can document and provide evidence of skills that are attractive to future employers and college admissions office
- See bulleted list above for additional purposes for instituting the Seal of Biliteracy

*For more information, please contact Linda Markley at [lindamarkley@bellsouth.net](mailto:lindamarkley@bellsouth.net)*