**Letter Template—Cuts to U.S. Funding of World Language Education**

I write today as a constituent with concerns about the President's budget blueprint and the devastating impact some of the proposed cuts would have on world language education. There is a well-documented dearth of Americans with the language skills to meet our nation's language and culture needs in areas such as economic growth and global trade, national defense, intelligence, and diplomacy, among others. Most recently, the congressionally-requested Commission on Language Learning of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences released its final report on February 28, calling for a national strategy to increase access to as many languages as possible for every region, ethnicity, and socioeconomic background. Nevertheless, the budget blueprint calls for severe cuts to programs which underlie our nation's pipeline of language education and which exist to meet national demands.

The blueprint calls for elimination of the Department of Education's International Education programs, also known as Title VI and Fulbright-Hays of the Higher Education Act, the Department of State's Educational and Cultural Exchange (ECE) Programs, and the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH). As you know, the justifications for programs listed in the blueprint for elimination are that they do not meet a national need, are duplicative, or that they could be implemented at the State and local levels or with private funds. None of these programs meet these criteria:

1.)   Title VI/Fulbright-Hays forms the bedrock of our nation's capacity in languages considered critical by the Department of Defense. Moreover, the programs provide foundational support to the U.S. Government's language investments in other departments and agencies. For example, the university-based programs of the Defense Language and National Security Education Office, including the Global Officer Program for ROTC, the Language Training Centers for company-grade officers, and the National Flagship Language Program, are almost exclusively co-located with Title VI National Resource Centers (NRCs) and Language Resource Centers (LRCs). Congress enacted Title VI in 1958 to ensure that our educational system prepares American students with the language skills and regional expertise our nation needs. The competitive nature of these grant programs ensures the highest-quality implementation of investments in these areas.

2.)   The Department of State's ECE programs, which support study abroad and academic exchanges, provide vital immersive and experiential language learning opportunities for students, while strengthening relations with other nations as tools of soft diplomacy. While the blueprint proposes to safeguard the Fulbright programs in the ECE budget, reductions to other portions of the ECE budget would severely limit opportunities for students to engage globally, particularly for economically disadvantaged youth and for traditionally underrepresented groups. Further, more than 160 nations worldwide participate in ECE programs; their elimination would damage America's relations with other nations.

3.)   The NEH is the only federal agency tasked with advancing U.S. achievement in the humanities disciplines, which includes language, both modern and classical, and linguistics. NEH reaches tens of millions of Americans in urban and rural communities alike through its support of research and teacher training, libraries and museums, documentary filmmaking and radio broadcasting, as well as the preservation and maintenance of cultural and linguistic heritage. Moreover, NEH is responsive to national needs, pioneering innovative solutions to national challenges. Recent examples include initiatives to serve America's Veterans through the humanities, such as programming that helps Veterans transition into post-deployment higher education.

In addition, while it is not listed in the budget blueprint, I have concerns that the Administration would discourage funding for Title IV Part A of the Every Student Succeeds Act, which would provide population-formula block grants to SEAs to support well-rounded education, including world languages.

I respectfully request that you support robust funding at or above FY 2016 levels for all of these programs, as well as full funding for Title IV Part A of ESSA, as Congress works on FY 2018 appropriations. In the grand scheme of the federal budget, these programs are minor investments with pervasive and far-reaching benefits for our students and communities. We cannot afford to be shortsighted when it comes to our national language needs and the importance of a citizenry that can meaningfully participate in the globalized 21st century.