

The Commission on Language Learning

Marty Abbott, Executive Director, American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL)

Dr. Dan Davidson, President, American Councils for International Education (ACIE)

ILR Meeting

April 15, 2016

CONGRESSIONAL REQUEST- AAAS STUDY

Congress has requested that the American Academy of Arts & Sciences to conduct a report on language learning in the U.S., with a particular focus on the competitiveness of American students.



Congressional Study Request:



Diplomatic and National Interests?

Productivity of future generations?

Ensure excellence in language and international education and research?

Influence of language learning on economic growth?

CONGRESSIONAL REQUEST- AAAS STUDY

Congressional Leaders



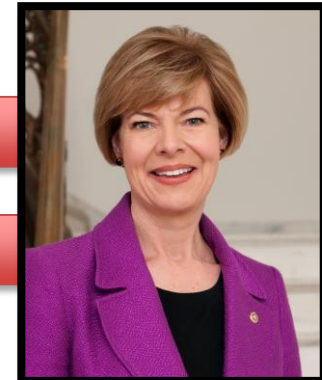
Senator Brian Schatz
Democrat – Hawaii



Senator Orrin Hatch
Republican – Utah



Senator Mark Kirk
Republican – Illinois



Senator Tammy Baldwin
Democrat – Wisconsin

CONGRESSIONAL REQUEST- AAAS STUDY

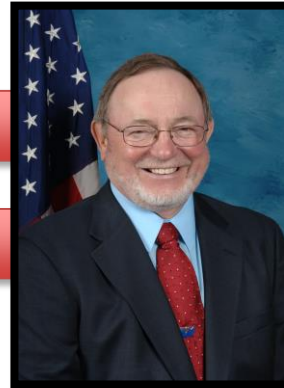
Congressional Leaders



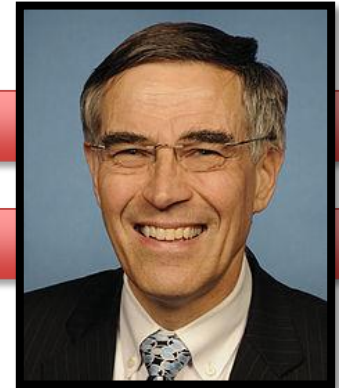
Rep. Leonard Lance
Republican – New Jersey



Rep. David Price
Democrat – North Carolina



Rep. Don Young
Republican – Alaska



Rep. Rush D. Holt
Democrat – New Jersey



American Academy of Arts and Sciences & Language

- AAAS – founded in 1780 by John Adams and others
- Oldest US Academy
- **2013: *The Heart of the Matter*** – Commission on the Humanities and Social Sciences
 - Requested by Congress in 2012
- **2014: Request from Congress** to AAAS to assess the impact of language on the national interest
 - First broad based, requested study since 1979 (President's Commission/Strength Through Wisdom)
- **2016: Lincoln Report**—The Role of the Public Research University



American Academy of Arts and Sciences & Language

- **July 2015:** Commission established
- New commission will work for approximately a year to assess the impact on language education, global security, economic growth, and social justice
- Then spend a second year disseminating information

Commission members

- Chair: Dr. Paul LeClerc, former CEO, NYPL and former president, CUNY-Hunter
- Members as of 11/5/15 (* denotes a fellow of AAAS):
 - Dr. Dan Davidson, President, American Councils for International Education
 - Ms. Marty Abbott, Executive Director, ACTFL
 - Dr. Rosemary Feal, Executive Director, MLA
 - Amb. Karl Eikenberry*, LTG, USA (ret.), Stanford University
 - Dr. Pauline Yu*, President, American Council of Learned Societies
 - Dr. Nicholas Dirks*, Chancellor, University of California (Berkeley)
 - Ms. Jessie Little Doe Baird, Wôpanâak Nation
 - Dr. Mark Aronoff*, SUNY-Stonybrook, Dept. of Linguistics
 - Dr. Phil Rubin, Haskins Lab
 - Dr. Ruben Rumbaut, University of California, Irvine
 - Hon. Diane Wood*, Chief Judge, US Court of Appeals, 7th Circuit
 - Dr. Carol Gluck*, Columbia University
 - Dr. Hunter Rawlings*, American Association of Universities
 - Amb. Nancy McEldowney, Foreign Service Institute, Department of State
 - Dr. Marta Tienda*, Princeton University
- <https://www.amacad.org/content/Research/researchproject.aspx?i=21896>

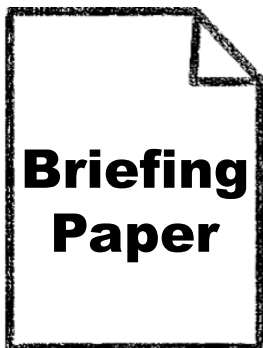
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Briefing Paper

America's Languages: Challenges and Promise

- **Richard Brecht**, American Councils on International Education

- Overview paper for the Commission
- Premise: Many reasons to invest in language learning
 - Educational & Cognitive benefits from bilingualism
 - Global security
 - Economic growth
- Significant challenges:
 - Perceptions among policy makers at all levels that English is enough, that the rest of the world is learning English, that other subjects (e.g., coding) are more important
 - Perceptions among policy makers that language learning is too hard – can't be done
- Reason for optimism:
 - Outcomes: where we do language well (e.g., Dual Language, Flagships) at the Advanced threshold for HS graduates and Superior for college graduates
 - Public support – parents want their children to learn languages
 - The employment sector wants “linguistic and cultural human capital”



The Contribution of Language to the Economic Interests of the US

- William Rivers, JNCL-NCLIS

- Language is an important component of the US economy
 - The language industry has annual revenues in the US of at least \$15b
 - The language industry provides work for more than 200,000 Americans, at an annual pay averaging \$80,000
 - The public sector – teaching at all levels, US Government linguists – employs at least another 150,000 Americans
- The Language industry is highly tech-savvy
 - Translation, localization, and globalization depend on technology
 - Language learning makes increasing, innovative use of technology

The Contribution of Language to the Economic Interests of the US, cont.

- The broader employment sector increasingly values “global talent”
 - 11% of US mid- and large-size companies (of which there are 120,000) seek to fill jobs requiring language (Michigan State University Recruiting Trends Survey)
 - 45% of US companies give advantage to candidates with language skills
 - Language and cultural expertise are equated with flexibility, adaptability, prudent risk-taking, and interpersonal skills
 - Global Talent = Language + another skill [teaching, translating, accounting, engineering, etc.)

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Briefing Paper

Foreign Language, Cultural Diplomacy, and Global Security

- Gail McGinn, Former Deputy Under Secretary for Defense

- Language is vital to how the US meets its global responsibilities
- The Federal Government faces persistent challenges in building and sustaining the required language capacity
 - Diversity of languages required for Federal Agencies
 - Diversity of agencies & missions
 - Diversity of languages
- Historically, responding only to imminent crises (World War II, Sputnik/Cold War, Iranian Revolution, Gulf War)
- After 9/11, sustained efforts across the US Government:
 - National Security Language Initiative
 - Defense Language Transformation Roadmap
 - National Language Service Corps
 - The Language Flagship
 - STARTALK

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Briefing Paper

Language and Productivity for All Americans

- Judith Kroll and Paola Dussias, The Pennsylvania State University

- Bilingualism confers many cognitive and educational benefits
 - No matter how or when acquired
 - Language *use* is the key factor – the more language the better, higher proficiency correlates with larger effects
 - Biliteracy matters, especially for educational effects
- Educational:
 - Children in dual language programs perform better on standardized tests by 5th grade (North Carolina, Portland, Oregon)
 - Bilinguals acquire additional languages much faster – 2x as fast if the languages are related (e.g., French and Spanish); but this holds even for unrelated languages
- Cognitive
 - Infants in bilingual households process information more efficiently
 - Bilingual children have better executive control (attention, planning)
 - Bilingualism in adults correlates with a 5-year delay in the onset of the symptoms of Alzheimer's disease

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Briefing Paper

Language and the Fulfillment of the Potential of all Americans

- Terry Wiley, et al, Center for Applied Linguistics

- 60 million Americans speak a language other than English at home
- We don't have enough programs for heritage language speakers to maintain their home languages
- English Language Learner programs, required by Federal law as a matter of civil rights, are also insufficient for the demand
 - Dual Language has emerged in the past ten years as the most effective ELL program
 - But teacher shortages and funding shortages limit the capacity
- Civil Rights regulations ensure access to social services for those who can't speak English
 - Capacity has not grown as fast as the demand, especially in languages of lesser diffusion
 - Discrimination persists, especially in the workplace



LEAD

with LANGUAGES

INTRODUCTION TO A
CONVERSATION-CHANGING MOVEMENT

Lead with Languages is a movement to:

- ⊙ Make languages a national priority
- ⊙ Create a new generation of Americans
 - Competent in other languages and cultures
 - Better equipped to compete and succeed in the 21st century

Lead with Languages is

- ⊙ A fully integrated campaign, involving digital, earned and paid media and celebrity involvement
- ⊙ National in scope
- ⊙ Awareness-based, advocacy-oriented

WHAT ARE THE OBJECTIVES OF LEAD WITH LANGUAGES?

Increase enrollment and language options in world language programs at all grade levels

Strengthen and expand language programs and their funding

Engage leaders from business, education, government and other stakeholders

Build awareness among heritage populations



ACTFL AMERICAN COUNCIL ON THE
TEACHING OF FOREIGN LANGUAGES

BACKED BY PASSIONATE SUPPORTERS

Lead With Languages' Honorary Council, consisting of influential language advocates includes, among others:



JON HUNTSMAN

Former Governor of Utah, Former
U.S. Ambassador to Singapore
and China



BILL RICHARDSON

Former Governor of New Mexico,
Former U.S. Secretary of Energy



MICHAEL NUTTER

Former Mayor of
Philadelphia



LEON PANETTA

Former U.S. Secretary of Defense,
Former Director of the Central
Intelligence Agency



TAMMY DUCKWORTH

U.S. Representative for Illinois's
8th Congressional District



IAN BREMMER

President of
the Eurasia Group



KIRSTEN GILLIBRAND

U.S. Senator (NY)



TONY JACKSON

Vice President of Education for
The Asia Society



DAVID PRICE

U.S. Representative for North
Carolina's 4th District



FERNANDO M. REIMERS

Ford Foundation Professor
of International Education at
Harvard University



RON KIRK

Former United States Trade
Representative



CARLOS GHOSN

Chairman and CEO of
Renault S.A. and Nissan Motor
Company Ltd.



LeadWithLanguages.org

A campaign powered by



ACTFL

AMERICAN COUNCIL ON THE
TEACHING OF FOREIGN LANGUAGES



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Next steps for the Commission

Three
Public
Meetings

- 1st meeting: December, 15: 2015: Cambridge, MA
- 2nd Feb. 29 in New York
- 3rd tentatively set for June

Public
input

- Testimony (invited)
- Written input
- Public comments

Briefing
Papers

Report to
Congress,
Fall 2016

2016-2017:
Dissemination
of Report

Issues to Consider

- Need for current data about language instruction in the US; enrollments, trends, outcomes
- Major public policy challenges facing the expansion and institutionalization of language learning in the US
- Current research findings about L2 acquisition and research gaps

Contact

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- Marty Abbott, mabbott@actfl.org