

109TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

S. 1089

To establish the National Foreign Language Coordination Council to develop and implement a foreign language strategy, and for other purposes.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

MAY 19, 2005

Mr. AKAKA (for himself, Mr. COCHRAN, and Mr. DODD) introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions

A BILL

To establish the National Foreign Language Coordination Council to develop and implement a foreign language strategy, and for other purposes.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “National Foreign Lan-
5 guage Coordination Act of 2005”.

6 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

7 Congress finds that—

8 (1) there is a severe shortage of qualified lan-
9 guage professionals, including teachers, translators,

1 and interpreters, especially in less commonly taught
2 languages, across the United States;

3 (2) Federal, State, and local governments need
4 individuals with bilingual and bicultural capabilities,
5 including—

6 (A) diplomats;

7 (B) defense and intelligence analysts;

8 (C) military personnel;

9 (D) foreign language instructors;

10 (E) health professionals;

11 (F) medical and social services providers;

12 (G) court interpreters;

13 (H) translators; and

14 (I) law enforcement officers;

15 (3) deficiencies in the national language capa-
16 bilities have—

17 (A) undermined cross-cultural communica-
18 tion and understanding at home and abroad;

19 (B) restrained social mobility;

20 (C) lessened national commercial competi-
21 tiveness;

22 (D) limited the effectiveness of public di-
23 plomacy;

24 (E) restricted justice and government serv-
25 ices to sectors of society; and

1 (F) threatened national security;

2 (4) ample resources are not available to develop
3 language and cultural capabilities in all of the
4 world's languages, requiring prioritization of such
5 resources; and

6 (5) a National Foreign Language Coordination
7 Council and a National Language Director can help
8 to raise public awareness and provide top-down co-
9 ordination and direction.

10 **SEC. 3. ESTABLISHMENT OF THE NATIONAL FOREIGN LAN-**
11 **GUAGE COORDINATION COUNCIL.**

12 (a) ESTABLISHMENT.—There is established the Na-
13 tional Foreign Language Coordination Council (referred
14 to as the “Council” in this Act), which shall be an inde-
15 pendent establishment as defined under section 104 of
16 title 5, United States Code.

17 (b) MEMBERSHIP.—The Council shall consist of the
18 following members or their designees:

19 (1) The National Language Director, who shall
20 serve as the chairperson of the Council.

21 (2) The Secretary of Education.

22 (3) The Secretary of Defense.

23 (4) The Secretary of State.

24 (5) The Secretary of Homeland Security.

25 (6) The Attorney General.

1 (7) The Director of National Intelligence.

2 (8) The Secretary of Labor.

3 (9) The Director of the Office of Personnel
4 Management.

5 (10) The Director of the Office of Management
6 and Budget.

7 (11) The Secretary of Commerce.

8 (12) The Secretary of Health and Human Serv-
9 ices.

10 (13) The Secretary of the Treasury.

11 (14) The Secretary of Housing and Urban De-
12 velopment.

13 (15) The Secretary of Agriculture.

14 (16) The heads of such other Federal agencies
15 as the Council considers appropriate.

16 (c) RESPONSIBILITIES.—

17 (1) IN GENERAL.—The Council shall be
18 charged with—

19 (A) developing a national foreign language
20 strategy within 18 months of the date of enact-
21 ment of this Act; and

22 (B) overseeing the implementation of such
23 strategy.

24 (2) STRATEGY CONTENT.—The strategy devel-
25 oped under paragraph (1) shall include—

1 (A) identification of crucial priorities
2 across all sectors;

3 (B) identification and evaluation of Fed-
4 eral foreign language programs and activities,
5 including—

6 (i) recommendations on coordination;

7 (ii) program enhancements; and

8 (iii) allocation of resources so as to
9 maximize use of resources;

10 (C) needed national policies and cor-
11 responding legislative and regulatory actions in
12 support of, and allocation of designated re-
13 sources to, promising programs and initiatives
14 at all levels (Federal, State, and local), espe-
15 cially in the less commonly taught languages
16 that are seen as critical for national security
17 and global competitiveness in the next 20 to 50
18 years;

19 (D) effective ways to increase public
20 awareness of the need for foreign language
21 skills and career paths in all sectors that can
22 employ those skills, with the objective of in-
23 creasing support for foreign language study
24 among—

25 (i) Federal, State, and local leaders;

- 1 (ii) students;
- 2 (iii) parents;
- 3 (iv) elementary, secondary, and post-
- 4 secondary educational institutions; and
- 5 (v) potential employers;
- 6 (E) incentives for related educational pro-
- 7 grams, including foreign language teacher
- 8 training;
- 9 (F) coordination of cross-sector efforts, in-
- 10 cluding public-private partnerships;
- 11 (G) coordination initiatives to develop a
- 12 strategic posture for language research and rec-
- 13 ommendations for funding for applied foreign
- 14 language research into issues of national con-
- 15 cern;
- 16 (H) assistance for—
- 17 (i) the development of foreign lan-
- 18 guage achievement standards; and
- 19 (ii) corresponding assessments for the
- 20 elementary, secondary, and postsecondary
- 21 education levels, including the National As-
- 22 sessment of Educational Progress in for-
- 23 eign languages;
- 24 (I) development of—

1 (i) language skill-level certification
2 standards;

3 (ii) an ideal course of pre-service and
4 professional development study for those
5 who teach foreign language;

6 (iii) suggested graduation criteria for
7 foreign language studies and appropriate
8 non-language studies, such as—

9 (I) international business;

10 (II) national security;

11 (III) public administration; and

12 (IV) health care; and

13 (J) identification of and means for repli-
14 cating best practices at all levels and in all sec-
15 tors, including best practices from the inter-
16 national community.

17 (d) MEETINGS.—The Council may hold such meet-
18 ings, and sit and act at such times and places, as the
19 Council considers appropriate, but shall meet in formal
20 session at least 2 times a year. State and local government
21 agencies and other organizations (such as academic sector
22 institutions, foreign language-related interest groups,
23 business associations, industry, and heritage community
24 organizations) shall be invited, as appropriate, to public
25 meetings of the Council at least once a year.

1 (e) STAFF.—

2 (1) IN GENERAL.—The Director may appoint
3 and fix the compensation of such additional per-
4 sonnel as the Director considers necessary to carry
5 out the duties of the Council.

6 (2) DETAILS FROM OTHER AGENCIES.—Upon
7 request of the Council, the head of any Federal
8 agency may detail, on a reimbursable basis, any of
9 the personnel of such agency to the Council.

10 (3) EXPERTS AND CONSULTANTS.—With the
11 approval of the Council, the Director may procure
12 temporary and intermittent services under section
13 3109(b) of title 5, United States Code.

14 (f) POWERS.—

15 (1) DELEGATION.—Any member or employee of
16 the Council may, if authorized by the Council, take
17 any action that the Council is authorized to take in
18 this Act.

19 (2) INFORMATION.—The Council may secure di-
20 rectly from any Federal agency such information the
21 Council considers necessary to carry out its respon-
22 sibilities. Upon request of the Director, the head of
23 such agency shall furnish such information to the
24 Council.

1 (3) DONATIONS.—The Council may accept, use,
2 and dispose of gifts or donations of services or prop-
3 erty.

4 (4) MAIL.—The Council may use the United
5 States mail in the same manner and under the same
6 conditions as other Federal agencies.

7 (g) CONFERENCES, NEWSLETTER, AND WEBSITE.—
8 In carrying out this Act, the Council—

9 (1) may arrange Federal, regional, State, and
10 local conferences for the purpose of developing and
11 coordinating effective programs and activities to im-
12 prove foreign language education;

13 (2) may publish a newsletter concerning Fed-
14 eral, State, and local programs that are effectively
15 meeting the foreign language needs of the nation;
16 and

17 (3) shall create and maintain a website con-
18 taining information on the Council and its activities,
19 best practices on language education, and other rel-
20 evant information.

21 (h) REPORTS.—Not later than 90 days after the date
22 of enactment of this Act, and annually thereafter, the
23 Council shall prepare and transmit to the President and
24 Congress a report that describes the activities of the Coun-
25 cil and the efforts of the Council to improve foreign lan-

1 guage education and training and impediments, including
2 any statutory and regulatory restrictions, to the use of
3 each such program.

4 **SEC. 4. ESTABLISHMENT OF A NATIONAL LANGUAGE DI-**
5 **RECTOR.**

6 (a) IN GENERAL.—There is established a National
7 Language Director who shall be appointed by the Presi-
8 dent. The National Language Director shall be a nation-
9 ally recognized individual with credentials and abilities
10 across all of the sectors to be involved with creating and
11 implementing long-term solutions to achieving national
12 foreign language and cultural competency.

13 (b) RESPONSIBILITIES.—The National Language Di-
14 rector shall—

15 (1) develop and oversee the implementation of
16 a national foreign language strategy across all sec-
17 tors;

18 (2) establish formal relationships among the
19 major stakeholders in meeting the needs of the Na-
20 tion for improved capabilities in foreign languages
21 and cultural understanding, including Federal,
22 State, and local government agencies, academia, in-
23 dustry, labor, and heritage communities; and

24 (3) coordinate and lead a public information
25 campaign that raises awareness of public and private

1 sector careers requiring foreign language skills and
2 cultural understanding, with the objective of increas-
3 ing interest in and support for the study of foreign
4 languages among national leaders, the business com-
5 munity, local officials, parents, and individuals.

6 (c) COMPENSATION.—The National Language Direc-
7 tor shall be paid at a rate of pay payable for a position
8 at level V of the Executive Schedule under section 5316
9 of title 5, United States Code.

10 **SEC. 5. ENCOURAGEMENT OF STATE INVOLVEMENT.**

11 (a) STATE CONTACT PERSONS.—The Council shall
12 consult with each State to provide for the designation by
13 each State of an individual to serve as a State contact
14 person for the purpose of receiving and disseminating in-
15 formation and communications received from the Council.

16 (b) STATE INTERAGENCY COUNCILS AND LEAD
17 AGENCIES.—Each State is encouraged to establish a State
18 interagency council on foreign language coordination or
19 designate a lead agency for the State for the purpose of
20 assuming primary responsibility for coordinating and
21 interacting with the Council and State and local govern-
22 ment agencies as necessary.

1 **SEC. 6. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.**

2 There are authorized to be appropriated such sums

3 as necessary to carry out this Act.

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