

Language Institute (DLI), requires officers to learn another language, and identifies DOD's long and short-term language needs.

About two years ago the Department of State instituted a Language Continuum that requires Foreign Service Officers to know two additional languages and be able to use them. State has increased their support for the Foreign Service Institute (FSI) and Education and Cultural Affairs (ECA). This latter support will continue to increase as part of the NSLI through increases in Gilman Scholarships for needy students to study critical need languages abroad, increases in immersion language study centers overseas, and the creation of new State Department summer immersion study programs.

Some of the changes put forth as part of NSLI will require Congress to authorize new or amended legislation as well as provide the appropriations of funds. The first session of the 109th Congress considered twenty-six bills dealing with languages and international education. In such an environment, it seems quite likely that there will be considerable legislative support for new and increased programs dealing with languages. In fact, some of the pending legislation such as H.R. 4629, Rep. Rush Holt's K-16 Critical Foreign Languages Pipeline Act anticipates the President's Initiative. Other bills such as H.R.115, Holt's National Security Language Act; S.1089, Senator Akaka's National Foreign Language Coordination Act; or S. 1117, Senators Lieberman and Alexander's U.S.-- People's Republic of China Cultural Engagement Act would go considerably beyond NSLI.

Additionally, Congress still has to reauthorize the Higher Education Act in which Title VI contains \$93 million in programs dealing with International Studies and Foreign Language Education. The Senate has passed its version of reauthorization which contains S. 1105, Senators Dodd and Cochran's International and Foreign Language Studies Act. However, the House of Representatives still has to pass its version and then both houses have to reach agreement. While passage of a final bill in the 109th Congress is not certain, what is very heartening is that both houses' bills have provisions beyond Title VI that provide support for financial assistance and loan forgiveness for foreign languages. In short, both the Administration and Congress are providing attention to and support for languages. This is a confluence of interest that has not happened in the last forty years.

Leaving the State Department after the President's speech, I overheard a college president telling a media interview, "It's a good beginning." NSLI is a good beginning. The Lincoln Commission and the CED report are good beginnings. Internal initiatives and changes within federal agencies are good beginnings. Many of the congressional bills and amendments are good beginnings. Taken together, they may be the beginning of a good era for languages in the United States. If this is the case, this beginning is in large part possible because of the unity of the language profession, because of effective and tireless advocacy, and because of the knowledge, expertise, and effectiveness of language professionals. These three factors will be even more important not just in determining how we begin the new language era, but in determining what this era accomplishes.

Portland Public Schools/University of Oregon K-16 Chinese Flagship Program

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The Center for Applied Second Language Studies (CASLS) at the University of Oregon and the Portland Public School District (PPS), co-beneficiaries of a generous National Security Education Program (NSEP) grant, are collaborating to develop a K-16 Mandarin Chinese learning experience for students. This unique program is the first in the nation and will serve as a national model for future NSEP programs. The expectation is that Flagship scholars will learn, grow, challenge, and support each other through the challenges of balancing their demanding course load. They will also be actively involved in sharing the Chinese culture with the larger university community.

The National Flagship Language Program is an impetus for changing how languages are taught in the United States. Recognizing the benefits of learning a second language at an early age, this program will, in part, draw on students from the Woodstock Elementary School in PPS, which started its Mandarin Chinese immersion program in 1997 as a grassroots effort by parents and educators who were eager to replicate the success of Japanese and Spanish immersion programs in Portland. Flagship scholars will also be selected from a