

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

March 13, 2020

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro  
Chairman  
Subcommittee on Labor-HHS-Ed  
House Appropriations Committee  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Tom Cole  
Ranking Member  
Subcommittee on Labor-HHS-Ed  
House Appropriations Committee  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairwoman DeLauro and Ranking Member Cole:

As you consider appropriations for Fiscal Year (FY) 2021, we respectfully request that the House Appropriations Committee reject the President's proposal to eliminate dedicated federal funding for English Language Acquisition grants. We encourage you to instead provide \$980.4 million, the same level passed by the House in Fiscal Year 2020.

The English Language Acquisition program provides formula grants to states to serve English learners in our public schools. This critical funding not only helps students succeed in the classroom, but also supports professional development to increase the pool of teachers needed to support this population.

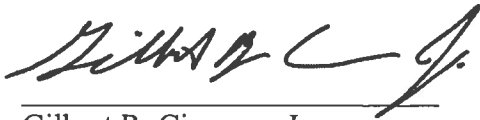
English language students are the fastest-growing student population group. In 2000, 3.8 million English learners were enrolled in K-12 schools. By 2016, that number increased by 28 percent to nearly five million, meaning 1 in 10 students in our public schools rely on English Language Acquisition grants to succeed. But despite the significant population increase, funding for English Language Acquisition grants did not increase at the same rate to support the expanded number of students that must be served.

Although there has been some progress in recent years, significant achievement gaps persist between English learners and their peers. According to the Department of Education, in the 2015-2016 school year, 84 percent of students nationwide graduated from high school on time. For English learners, the rate was just 67 percent. Those without a high school diploma experience lower earnings and higher unemployment than those with a diploma. Giving students the language skills they need to fully take part in educational activities will help them succeed in and out of the classroom.

As the Supreme Court made clear in *Lau v. Nichols*, school districts have an obligation to provide supplemental instruction to English learners. Preserving the dedicated funding stream for the English Language Acquisition grants at a level that will adequately support student instruction nationwide will promote accountability and ensure schools continue to live up to their legal obligations.

Therefore, we respectfully request that you provide \$980.4 million for English Language Acquisition grants in FY 2021. We must do all that we can to provide appropriate resources to ensure that educational outcomes for English learners are in step with all student groups and that they exit the K-12 system ready to succeed in college and their careers.

Sincerely,



Gilbert R. Cisneros, Jr.  
Member of Congress



Andy Kim  
Member of Congress

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Member of Congress