

March 27, 2026

The Honorable Shelley Moore Capito
Chair
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and
Human Services, Education, and Related
Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Tammy Baldwin
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and
Human Services, Education, and Related
Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Robert Aderholt
Chair
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and
Human Services, Education, and Related
Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
United States House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and
Human Services, Education, and Related
Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
United States House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chair Capito, Chair Aderholt, Ranking Member Baldwin and Ranking Member DeLauro:

The undersigned 123 organizations, respectfully request that you include **\$1 billion** for the **English Language Acquisition** grant program, authorized by **Title III** of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), in the Fiscal Year (FY) 2027 Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies appropriations bill. Title III is a foundational formula grant program dedicated to providing English learners with the resources they need to learn English and meet the same challenging academic standards as their peers. A \$1 billion investment will help level the playing field for English learners, enabling all students to access a high-quality education, regardless of what language they speak at home.

English learners are students aged 3 to 21 who are enrolled in elementary or secondary school and need greater English proficiency to succeed in school. They represent 1 in 10 of all K-12 public school students nationwide and this population continues to grow across the country, from rural communities to urban centers. English learner enrollment increased by 16% from 4.9 million in the 2012-13 school year to 5.7 million in the 2022-23 school year, the latest

enrollment numbers available. Despite the rising number of English learners, Congress has flat funded the program at \$890 million for the past three years. At its current level, Title III only provides a mere \$156 per English learner. Congress has also failed to adjust the investment to account for inflation. In fact, the Children’s Equity Project estimates that the 2002 appropriation of \$664 million, the year Title III was established, would be equivalent to \$1.19 billion today.

Across all 50 states, schools rely on Title III funds to provide supports, including language and academic content instruction, English learner-focused training for teachers, and family engagement activities that enhance language instruction. ESSA provides schools the flexibility to tailor instruction to meet communities’ unique needs, as it neither requires nor prohibits the use of a specific curriculum or approach.

Research shows that with proper support, most English learners acquire English proficiency within five to seven years and are then reclassified as English proficient. Several studies show that these reclassified, former English learners can go on to outperform their non-English learner peers across multiple academic measures, revealing what these students can accomplish when properly supported. However, without appropriate interventions, English learners can become long-term English learners, who are more likely to fare worse across several measures, including academic achievement, high school graduation, and college enrollment rates.

Another important factor in helping English learners succeed is ensuring they have teachers who are well prepared to provide the specialized instruction they need. In addition to state grants, Title III also authorizes the National Professional Development (NPD) Program, which provides grants to colleges and universities to develop training programs specifically designed to equip teachers with the skills and knowledge needed to improve academic outcomes for English learners. Our nation’s teachers critically need this tailored training, as less than half (48%) of teachers felt prepared to teach English learners, according to a RAND survey published last year. Unfortunately, some NPD grantees saw their funding abruptly cancelled and there is uncertainty about how these funds were reallocated.

Amid current challenges, it is especially critical that the subcommittee ensure the effective and efficient distribution and use of Title III funds. On March 11, 2025, the U.S. Department of Education terminated all but one staff member within the Office of English Language Acquisition (OELA), which administers Title III. Shortly thereafter, the department folded OELA into the Office of Elementary and Secondary Education (OESE). Furthermore, this past November, the department transferred the management of Title III to the Department of Labor. These decisions significantly disrupt the administration of Title III, jeopardizing the timely disbursement of funds and the quality of technical assistance states receive to ensure the best use of funds.

We thank Congress and the committees for ensuring that the FY 2026 appropriations law included provisions to ensure sufficient staffing at the department to meet statutory requirements, as well as the timely disbursement of appropriated title education funds, including Title III, and reiterate that the department cannot transfer core responsibilities to other agencies. Furthermore, we appreciate report language outlining the intention for the department to carry out all English learning education programs, including the National Professional Development Program.

We strongly urge the inclusion of bill language instructing the Secretary of Education to restore OELA as a standalone office at the department with adequate staffing within 30 days of enactment. Such actions will reinforce OELA's charge to administer the Title III program, as only OELA is positioned to do so efficiently and in the best interests of English learners.

We are committed to supporting our nation's 5.7 million English learners and ensuring that they have access to the same meaningful, high-quality education that their non-English learner peers do. Our nation's future prosperity depends on their success. We respectfully urge you to provide \$1 billion for Title III in FY 2027 and ensure the efficient use of these funds through a strong U.S. Department of Education and OELA. Should you have any questions, please contact Lina Lenis, Policy Analyst, K-12 Education, UnidosUS at ljenis@unidosus.org.

Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,

National Organizations:

ACTFL

All4Ed

American Association of Interpreters and Translators in Education (AAITE)

American Federation of Teachers

American Translators Association

Asian Americans Advancing Justice - AAJC

Association of Language Companies

Association of Latino Administrators and Superintendents

Center for Applied Linguistics

Center for Equity for English Learners | Loyola Marymount University

Clearinghouse on Women's Issues

Coalition of Community-Based Heritage Language Schools

Coalition on Human Needs

Community HousingWorks

ED-OCR Alumni Collective
EdTrust
Education Law Center
Empowering Latino Futures
English Learner Initiative, PreK–12 Education, Education & Work, New America
English Learner Portal
Ensemble Learning
Feminist Majority
IDRA
Immigrant Connections
Joint National Committee for Languages
Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law
League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC)
Learning Lab for Resiliency®
MALDEF
NAELPA - National Association of English Learner Program Administrators
National AgFamilies Head Start Association
National Association for Bilingual Education
National Center for Learning Disabilities
National Center for Youth Law
National Council for Languages and International Studies
National Education Association
National Network for Arab American Communities
National Newcomer Network
National Parents Union
SchoolHouse Connection
Southeast Asia Resource Action Center (SEARAC)
Southern Conference on Language Teaching
Southern Poverty Law Center
TESOL International Association
The Internationals Network
UMOS
UnidosUS

State-Based Organizations:

Alabama:

Hispanic and Immigrant Center of Alabama

Arizona:

AZTESOL – Arizona Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages

Arkansas:

Arkansas United

California:

Alliance for a Better Community

Bresee Foundation

California Association of Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (CATESOL)

California Language Teachers Association

Californians Together

Camino Nuevo Charter Academy

ConXion to Community

Early Edge California

El Concilio California

El Sol Science and Arts Academy

La Raza Community Resource Center

Los Angeles Unified School District

Para Los Niños

PIQE (Parent Institute for Quality Education)

PUENTE Learning Center

UNITE-LA

Colorado:

Alianza NORCO

American Friends Service Committee, Colorado

Atlantis Community, Inc.

Colorado Consumer Health Initiative

Colorado Language Access Coalition

Colorado Latino Leadership, Advocacy & Research Organization (CLLAROP)

Compañeros: Four Corners Immigrant Resource Center

Nyadak Pal Peace Foundation

Spring Institute for Intercultural Learning

The Colorado Children's Campaign

Delaware:

DECTFL

Latin American Community Center

Georgia:

Latin American Association

Illinois:

Brighton Park Neighborhood Council

Erie Neighborhood House

Illinois Migrant Council

Latino Policy Forum

Indiana:

Indiana Foreign Language Teachers Association (IFLTA)

INTESOL

Kansas:

Kansas World Language Association

Maine:

The Marvel of Languages

Maryland:

Maryland Foreign Language Association

MD TESOL

Michigan:

Southwest Economic Solutions DBA MiSide Wealth

Minnesota:

MinneTESOL

Mississippi:

MIRA/Mississippi Immigrants Rights Alliance

Missouri:

Foreign Language Association of Missouri (FLAM)

Missouri Asian American Youth Foundation

Nevada:

REACH

New Jersey:
NJTESOL/NJBE

New York:
Amber Charter Schools
Dominico-American Society of Queens
Language Testing International

North and South Dakota:
Dakota TESOL

Ohio:
El Centro de Servicios Sociales, Inc
HOLA Ohio
OPAWL - Building AAPI Feminist Leadership

Oklahoma:
Oklahoma Foreign Language Teachers' Association

Oregon:
Adelante Mujeres
Latino Network

Pennsylvania:
Education Law Center - PA
Esperanza Academy Charter Schools
Esperanza Cyber Charter School
PennTESOL East

Puerto Rico:
One Stop Career Center of PR Inc

Rhode Island:
Coalition for a Multilingual Rhode Island
Rhode Island Teachers of English Language Learners (RITELL)

Tennessee:
Centro Hispano de East Tennessee
Conexion Americas

La Paz Chattanooga

Texas:

Asian Texans for Justice

Texas Association for Bilingual Education

Utah:

Utah Foreign Language Association (UFLA)

Vermont (+ New Hampshire and Maine):

NNETESOL

Virginia:

Foreign Language Association of Virginia

West Virginia:

WV Foreign Language Teachers' Association (WVFLTA)

Wisconsin:

WITESOL