



March 24, 2020

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Senate Majority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Charles Schumer
Senate Minority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Majority Leader McConnell and Minority Leader Schumer,

I write today on behalf of EnglishUSA, the largest association of English language programs in the United States, serving nearly 400 privately-owned independent and multi-site programs as well as member programs on university and college campuses. The post-secondary English language education sector is often the entry point for the international education export sector in the US. This sector, which plays a significant role in international education programs and activities in the US, is at risk of being decimated as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. This includes the risk of closure of many English language programs in nearly every US state.

We are requesting support for the English language education sector impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic as part of any federal stimulus or relief for U.S. higher education or the broader travel industry considered by the Senate. We fear that the long-term impact of the COVID-19 pandemic will be a profound shock to the multiple layers of international education.

Consider:

- Many international students who come to the US go through our members' programs & courses first to learn and/or improve English to enroll in the high-quality higher education system in the US or to take their skill set home for professional purposes. We are the entry point.
- The nearly 1.1 million international students in the US and their visiting families, are also tourists (and counted within the tourism and hospitality numbers) and use all tourism, hospitality, and restaurant services. Without them, many American businesses in certain regions would not thrive.
- According to NAFSA¹, for 2018-19 academic year, international students in the US contributed nearly \$41 billion to the U.S. economy and supported 458,290 jobs. For every seven international students, three U.S. jobs are created and supported by spending occurring in the higher education, accommodation, dining, retail, transportation, telecommunications and health insurance sectors. The economic contributions of international students in the US are in addition to the immeasurable academic and cultural value these students bring to our campuses and local communities.

¹ Sources used in NAFSA's economic analysis for 2018-2019 Academic Year: U.S. Department of Education, U.S. Department of Commerce, and the *Open Doors* Report.

The issue:

- Without immediate and reasonable financial support for the nearly 400 programs the English language program sector, we estimate that many will go out of business or be so financially crippled that it will take years to rebuild to pre-crisis numbers for jobs and export revenues. The financial support can include:
 - capital to cover operational expenses (rents & facilities) and compensation for teachers & staff
 - relief compensation for teachers & staff who get laid off

With strategic support, the number of language schools ready to reboot after the COVID-19 crisis will be much higher, and as a nimble sector that revived after 9/11, we are confident we can rebuild in 1-2 years. International education and exchange is essential to U.S. leadership, global competitiveness, research and innovation, intercultural understanding, and public diplomacy. As you consider providing financial assistance to critical sectors negatively impacted by this crisis like the travel industry, we urge you to ensure that support for international education, including post-secondary English language programs in the private sector and those governed by higher education institutions.

EnglishUSA appreciates your leadership during this extraordinary global crisis.

Sincerely,



Cheryl Delk-Le Good
Executive Director

EnglishUSA is the largest organization in the United States that includes all types of English language programs (ELPs), including pathway programs within institutions. With a membership of nearly 400 accredited ELPs, we are the largest membership organization specifically serving and supporting ELPs in the United States. We support the professional development of ELP leaders and staff, uphold professional standards for ELPs, and increase the visibility of English language study in the United States.