

109TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

S. RES. 308

Designating 2006 as the “Year of Study Abroad”.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

NOVEMBER 10, 2005

Mr. DURBIN (for himself, Mr. ALEXANDER, Mr. FEINGOLD, Mr. CRAIG, Mr. AKAKA, Mr. COLEMAN, and Mr. COCHRAN) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to

RESOLUTION

Designating 2006 as the “Year of Study Abroad”.

Whereas ensuring that the citizens of the United States are globally literate is the responsibility of the educational system of the United States;

Whereas educating students internationally is an important way to share the values of the United States, to create goodwill for the United States around the world, to work toward a peaceful global society, and to increase international trade;

Whereas, according to a 2002 American Council on Education poll, 79 percent of people in the United States agree that students should have a study abroad experience sometime during college, but only 1 percent of students from the United States currently study abroad each year;

Whereas study abroad programs help people from the United States to be more informed about the world and to develop the cultural awareness necessary to avoid offending individuals from other countries;

Whereas a National Geographic global literacy survey found that 87 percent of students in the United States between the ages of 18 and 24 cannot locate Iraq on a world map, 83 percent cannot find Afghanistan, 58 percent cannot find Japan, and 11 percent cannot even find the United States;

Whereas studying abroad exposes students from the United States to valuable global knowledge and cultural understanding and forms an integral part of their education;

Whereas Congress recognized through the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1001 et seq.) that the security, stability, and economic vitality of the United States in an increasingly complex global age depend largely upon having a globally competent citizenry and the availability of experts specializing in world regions, foreign languages, and international affairs;

Whereas the Coalition for International Education, an ad hoc group of higher education organizations with interests in the international education programs of the Department of Education, and Government Accountability Office reports have found that Federal agencies, educational institutions, and corporations in the United States are suffering from a shortage of professionals with international knowledge and foreign language skills;

Whereas, according to the Coalition for International Education, institutions of higher education in the United States are struggling to graduate enough students with

the language skills and cultural competence necessary to meet the current demands of business, government, and educational institutions;

Whereas a survey done by the Institute for the International Education of Students shows that studying abroad influences subsequent educational experiences, decisions to expand or change academic majors, and decisions to attend graduate school;

Whereas substantive research literature demonstrates that some of the core values and skills of higher education are enhanced by participation in study abroad programs;

Whereas study abroad programs not only open doors to foreign language learning, but also empower students to better understand themselves and others through a comparison of cultural values and ways of life;

Whereas study abroad programs for students from the United States can provide specialized training and practical experiences not available at institutions in the United States;

Whereas a blue ribbon task force of NAFSA: Association of International Educators, a global association of individuals dedicated to advancing international education and exchange, found that a national effort to promote study abroad programs is needed to address a serious deficit in global competence in the United States;

Whereas the bipartisan, federally-appointed Commission on the Abraham Lincoln Study Abroad Fellowship Program, established pursuant to section 104 of the Miscellaneous Appropriations and Offsets Act, 2004 (division H of the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2004 (Public Law 108–199; 118 Stat. 435)), is scheduled to make recommenda-

tions by December 1, 2005, for a national study abroad program to meet this need: Now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved*, That the Senate—

2 (1) designates 2006 as the “Year of Study
3 Abroad”;

4 (2) encourages secondary schools, institutions
5 of higher learning, businesses, and government pro-
6 grams to promote and expand study abroad opportu-
7 nities; and

8 (3) encourages the people of the United States
9 to—

10 (A) support initiatives to promote and ex-
11 pand study abroad opportunities; and

12 (B) observe the “Year of Study Abroad”
13 with appropriate ceremonies, programs, and
14 other activities.

○