

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

October 21, 2020

Honorable Gene Dodaro
Comptroller General of the United States
U.S. Government Accountability Office
441 G Street NW
Washington, D.C. 20548

Dear Mr. Dodaro:

We are deeply concerned over reports of potential misuse of taxpayer funds allocated under Title VI of the Higher Education Act of 1965, which deals with international education programs both domestic and internationally. Annually, Congress appropriates approximately \$65 million for the seven authorized Title VI programs. We have a duty to ensure taxpayer dollars are used in a fashion that complies with the relevant laws governing such funds.

Title VI of the Higher Education Act of 1965 was designed to promote the national security, and economic stability of the United States. At the time of its creation, leaders recognized the need for a pool of foreign language experts who possessed knowledge in international affairs to serve as a resource for the federal government. However, nearly 60 years after its passage there appears to be several deficiencies as it relates to the programs ability to both prepare students for work in areas of national need and to provide an educational experience that offers balancing viewpoints.

As universities across the country continue to play an essential role in developing the next generation of leaders and scholars, it is crucial to ensure that all students have the opportunity to learn in an environment that presents information in a fair, unbiased manner.

Therefore, it is quite troubling to see such a lack of focus on language development among several National Resource Centers. Funds distributed under Title VI were not intended to advance questionable ideological priorities, especially views that often alienate specific religious minorities and fail to meet the Department's own stated standard of providing a full understanding of the regions in which the foreign language is commonly used.

This situation certainly raises concern and deserves a thorough examination. We are writing to request a report on the issue of misuse of taxpayer funds, and to determine the return on investment of programs established under Title VI of the Higher Education Act of 1965. Specifically, we ask that GAO provide a comprehensive evaluation of the problem, including:

- Document to what extent Title VI programs are delivering graduates that proceed to work in areas of national need and advance the national security of the United States.

- The extent in which Title VI programs, specifically National Resource Centers, provide a balanced perspective, one that offers a full understanding of the areas, regions, or countries in which the foreign language taught is commonly used.
- Ensure the federal funds used by universities for campus activities align with those lawfully established under Title VI.

Thank you for your attention to this request. We look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,



Kevin Cramer
U.S. Senator



Marco Rubio
U.S. Senator