

## TESOL U.S. Federal Policy Priorities for the 118<sup>th</sup> Congress

**TESOL International Association** (TESOL) is the trusted global authority for knowledge and expertise in English language teaching. With over 13,000 members world-wide, TESOL fosters the exchange of ideas to advance the expertise of those teaching English while supporting equity, diversity, access, and multilingualism. Issues and policy areas TESOL strongly supports include:

- **Sufficient and effective** funding for federal education programs serving all English learners and newcomers, from birth through adult education.
- **Improved** professional development and career pathways for existing and future English language teachers to gain the skills required to meet the needs of the country’s diverse English learner population of over 5 million K-12 students.
- **Fair** immigration policies that do not discriminate or favor individuals based on their country of origin, English language skills, education level, race, religion, or sexual orientation and seek to promote diverse, equitable, inclusive, and accessible environments within schools and communities.
- **Support** for schools as havens of trust, safety, and security so that our students can learn and our teachers provide that learning in enriching and vibrant environments, in confidence they are protected and free from harm.

**Entering the 118<sup>th</sup> Congress, the following are the legislative priorities of TESOL members:**

### Appropriations

Appropriations for ESSA Titles I, II, and III and for AEFLA (Title II of WIOA) and Title II of the Higher Education Act supporting Teacher Quality Partnerships (TQP)

Below are the FY22 and FY23 enacted budgets, the FY24 Presidential Proposed Budget, and the FY24 TESOL Ask

	FY22 Enacted	FY23 Enacted	FY24 Pres	FY24 Ask
<b>ESSA</b>				
<b>Title I</b>	\$17.5b	\$18.4b	\$20.5b	\$20.5b
<b>Title II-A</b>	\$2.17b	\$2.19b	\$2.19b	\$2.3b
<b>Title III</b>	\$831m	\$890m	\$1.19b	\$2b
<b>AEFLA (State)</b>	\$690.5m	\$715.5m	\$715.5m	\$810m
<b>HEA (TQP)</b>	\$59.1m	\$70m	\$132.1m	\$132.1m

We are asking \$2 billion for Title III ESSA to keep up with the population growth and impact of inflation. [See UnidosUS Report](#) on the impact of funding levels on per MLE expenditure.

<https://unidosus.org/publications/investing-in-english-learners-federal-recommendations/>

## Elementary/Secondary Education

### FLUENT Act

Families Learning and Understanding English Together Act

Introduced in 118<sup>th</sup> by Rep Grijalva (D-AZ-7) (Currently 3 Co-sponsors: Espaillat D-NY-13, Crockett D-TX-30, and Bowman D-NY-16)

To establish a grant program that provides literacy services to families with English language learners.

*Why does TESOL support this legislation? This legislation addressed unmet literacy needs of the families of English language learners to improve their educational, social, and economic advancement.*

### SYLLABLE Act

Supporting Young Language Learners' Access to Bilingual Education Act

Introduced in 118<sup>th</sup> by Rep Raúl Grijalva (D-AZ-7) (Currently 3 Co-sponsors: Espaillat D-NY-13, Crockett D-TX-30, and Bowman D-NY-16)

To establish high-quality dual language immersion programs in low-income communities

*Why does TESOL support this legislation? This legislation improves school readiness of children from low-income families, including English learners through incentivizing the development of high-quality dual language programs from preschool through fifth grade.*

### RELA: Reaching English Learners Act

Introduced in 118<sup>th</sup> by Rep Grijalva (D-AZ-7) (Currently 3 Co-sponsors: Espaillat D-NY-13, Crockett D-TX-30, and Bowman D-NY-16)

To establish a grant program, under Title II of the Higher Education Act, for preparing future teachers to effectively instruct English learners to achieve at high levels in early childhood education programs and in elementary and secondary schools. Grants must be given to partnerships between (1) certain institutions of higher education, and (2) high-need local educational agencies or high-need early childhood education programs.

*Why does TESOL support this legislation? This legislation will address teacher shortages for English language learners.*

### SPELL Act

Supporting Providers of English Language Learning Act

Introduced in 118<sup>th</sup> by Rep. Adriano Espaillat (D-NY-13) (Currently 14 cosponsors) H.R. 460  
Allows elementary and secondary school teachers who teach English learners, bilingual learners, or dual language immersion students to receive additional amounts of student loan forgiveness and loan cancellation.

*Why does TESOL support this legislation? This legislation will rightly include English Language Education as part of the Higher Education Act for the relief and forgiveness of loans. Currently the HEA only has Mathematics, Science, and Special Education.*

### [Uplifting Immigrant Students Act](#)

Introduced in the 118<sup>th</sup> by Rep. Adriano Espaillat (D-NY-13) (Currently has 7 cosponsors) H.R. 3138

Directs grants for additional activities, resources, and data collection for multilingual learners of English in U.S. public schools.

*Why does TESOL support this legislation? This legislation will provide accountability in monitoring the progress of MLEs, including former MLEs, and resources to expand access for MLEs and their families, including the provision of competent and responsive training for educators, school administrators, counselors, social workers, and psychologists in support of MLEs and immigrant children.*

## Adult Education

### **Reauthorization of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (Title II is the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act)**

#### [Strengthening Research in Adult Education Act](#)

Introduced in the 118<sup>th</sup> by Senators Jack Reed (D-RI) and Todd Young (R-IN), S 1268  
Amends the Education Sciences Reform Act of 2022 and directs research to gather data for improved effectiveness of adult education programs, with specific focus on digital and information literacy.

*Why does TESOL support this legislation? With almost half of the adult education participants being English learners, this bill will provide the means for enhanced support for ELs and all AEs by improving programs.*

#### [Adult Education Works Act](#)

Not yet introduced in the 118<sup>th</sup> but led by Senator Jack Reed (D-RI) and Cosponsored by Senator Todd Young (R-IN) as S. 5202.

*This bill adds much needed improvements to WIOA Title II (AEFLA), such as creating an innovative pilot performance accountability system, supporting professionalization of educators, and ensuring participation of adult educators in creating policy.*

## Higher Education

### **Establishing a National Strategy for International Education**

Builds off the [Joint Statement of Principles](#) (26 July 2021) by the US Departments of Education and State

*Promotes number and diversity of educational exchange and partnerships*

## All

### [Dignity Act of 2023](#)

Introduced in the 118<sup>th</sup> by Reps Maria Salazar (R-FL-27) and Veronica Escobar (D-TX-16)  
(Currently has 11 cosponsors) HR 3599

Bipartisan comprehensive immigration reform, addressing border security while providing the supports for Dreamers, undocumented, workforce access, and more.

*Why does TESOL support this legislation? While there is no perfect solution, this legislation is aligned with [TESOL's Position Statement on Comprehensive Immigration Reform](#) and provides the avenues to protect the undocumented and improve our asylum system. Additionally, this legislation will allow dual intent for F1 nonimmigrant visa holders. TESOL will work with Rep. Salazar in addressing the needs of MLEs and other newcomers.*