



Biliteracy Education Seal and Teaching Act

Quick Facts:

- Bilingualism is US resource: a language other than English is predominantly spoken in +20% of households (+65 million).
- Studies show that oral proficiency and literacy in a student's first language can facilitate English literacy development and vice versa.
- 36 states and the District of Columbia have established a state Seal program; and ALL 50 states are working on developing their Seal programs.

The Challenge: Each year, tens of thousands of high school students apply for and are awarded Seals of Biliteracy for being proficient in English and at least one other language. The Seal of Biliteracy is a prestigious academic recognition program officially established in 36 states, with the remainder of the Union working on establishing programs. However, many students do not have access to this opportunity due to the challenge of awareness, coordination and ultimately, implementation of the programs.

The Solution: The Biliteracy Education Seal and Teaching Act establishes a federal grant program to help states establish a Biliteracy Seal program that encourages and recognizes high school students who achieve proficiency in English and a second language, and that better enables these young people to compete in the global workforce.

This bill directs the Department of Education to award renewable two-year grants to states to establish or improve Seal of Biliteracy programs to recognize student proficiency in speaking, reading, and writing in both English and a second language. State must provide to participating students who demonstrate such proficiency: 1) documentation of that proficiency on their official academic transcripts, and 2) a permanent seal of other marker on their secondary school diplomas. Students who gain proficiency in a second language outside of school may participate in such programs. State may not charge students a program application fee.

The BEST Act is cosponsored by Representatives Tony Cárdenas (D-CA), Salud Carbajal (D-CA), Grace Napolitano (D-CA), Juan Vargas (D-CA), Lucille Roybal-Allard (D-CA), and Rick Nolan (D-MN). It is also supported by the California Association for Bilingual Education, California School Board Association, Californians Together, Early Edge, the National Council for Languages and International Studies, and Unidos Us.

We urge members of Congress to cosponsor the Biliteracy Education Seal and Teaching Act to encourage states across this nation in valuing multilingual students who will be our future teachers, doctors, lawyers, and business and community leaders.

Congressional Contacts

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