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Written by

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Language in Washington

FLENJ Update from JNCL Legislative Day

Amanda Seewald serves as the FLENJ Advocacy and JNCL Representative, NNELL Liaison, and elected member of the JNCL-NCLIS Board of Directors.

Advocacy Articles and Resources:

- To learn about JNCL – NCLIS visit languagepolicy.org
- Visit the FLENJ website at www.flenj.org and see the informational flyer given to our legislators
- Learn how to invite your member of Congress to a language program at www.actfl.org.

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"Foreign language instruction in schools can reverse achievement gaps, leaving children better prepared for the 21st century workforce." Bill Rivers, Executive Director JNCL-NCLIS

Looking for LEADER support

In May, FLENJ representatives Amanda Seewald and Jean Modig, accompanied by AATG Executive Director, Keith Cothrun (based in NJ) attended the JNCL-NCLIS Legislative Day in Washington, DC.

We took part in a two-day legislative advocacy event that included several meetings in legislative offices to help N.J. legislators see how they can support language and international education policy.

The Joint National Committee on Language and

National Council for Languages and International Studies is a coalition of from state, regional and national education associations and language focused enterprises.

JNCL-NCLIS advocates with legislators on Capitol Hill to help influence and assist in the development of national language education priorities and policy.

Our goals this year were to develop LEADER support (see below). This is an ongoing initiative to get legislators from our state to use the power of their voices

and votes to support legislation that will increase the access of American students to language education.

We visited the offices of Senator Cory Booker, Senator Robert Menendez, Representative Rush Holt, and Representative Rodney Frelinghuysen. Each office was interested in speaking out on this issue and we will continue to work with them to gain vocal legislative support and provide opportunities for them to see NJ world language programs at work!

What you can do...

Copy the LEADER Pledge and send it to your municipal and state representatives.

Ask them to write, speak, tweet, or post their support.

Take the LEADER Pledge

Language Education for American Development and Economic Realization

Be a vocal LEADER for New Jersey and help forge a globally successful future for American children.

- ✓ **Make your voice heard by releasing an official statement in support of language education! Say it, write it, and post it!**
- ✓ **Ask businesses in your state how language proficiency is important to them**
- ✓ **Take action by supporting and voting in favor of legislation that will help our nation fulfill its role as a global leader, and will empower our children with a bilingual and internationally focused education.**

N.J. Congressman Rush Holt Honored for Language Service to the Nation

By Amanda Seewald

After nearly 20 years of incredibly dedicated and meaningful service to our state and our country as a member of the U.S. House of Representatives, Rush Holt has announced that he is not seeking re-election. During his tenure in Congress, Mr. Holt has been a devoted advocate for language and cultural education. He has been responsible for sponsoring essential programs such as the National Language Service Corps, the Language Flagship, The Foreign Language Assistance Act of 2001, Title VI of the Higher Education Act, and many more. Mr. Holt was the recipient of the FLENJ President's Award in 2008.

On May 8, the inaugural Rush D. Holt Award for Language Service to the Nation was bestowed upon its namesake at a reception in Washington, DC. The award has been established to "honor exceptional public service in advancing the national interest through

language and international education, research and development, and practice." JNCL-NCLIS delegates participating in the JNCL-NCLIS Legislative Day were in attendance for this event. In addition to the Holt Award, the National Network for Early Language Learning gave Mr. Holt their award for distinguished service. FLENJ JNCL Delegate and board member, Amanda Seewald also shared remarks on behalf of FLENJ, expressing the organization's appreciation for his long-standing support and the pride he gives us as he represents New Jersey so boldly.

Mr. Holt's acceptance speech was one to rally the troops and he advised us to remain aware of important legislative opportunities coming up in the next year. His legacy is one of integrity and leadership that continues to put New Jersey at the forefront of the fight for a multilingual future for all American students.



Representative Rush Holt is thanked on behalf of FLENJ for his dedicated work by FLENJ board member and constituent Amanda Seewald.

What you can do...

Write a note or post your thanks publically to Representative Holt. Go to the office of your current Representative in Congress and ask him or her to help NJ continue to lead on this issue.

The Language Industry and the Value of Language in Business

By Amanda Seewald

"The language industry is a potent vehicle for economic development and jobs. Language is the New Oil that drives everything in the 21st century, and we need globally talented people right now." Hans Fenstermacher, CEO of the Globalization and Localization Association

There is urgency on the part of language related enterprises about which you may be unaware. CEO's of some of the nation's largest language driven businesses spoke at Legislative Day in a roundtable discussion with educators and language education professionals about the extreme need for capable language speakers in their offices.

Serving as translators, interpreters, project developers, and international managers, these individuals must be culturally experienced as well as linguistically advanced. It is the hope of these executives that they can connect to educational leaders and enhance language learning to build

their workforce.

This is not the first time we have heard about the shortage of language speakers in the U.S. Two years ago a Senate subcommittee hearing focused on the governmental shortages. Also, recently executives from large corporations like Coca-Cola have expressed publically that their workforce must be at least bilingual and connected to world cultures in order to be successful in their positions.

The discussion showed that there are things that can be done on both the educational side and the corporate side to draw attention and affect change. It also was a great opportunity for existing

resources to be shared. One of the best available resources regarding this is [a video that comes from the Network of Business Language Educators](#) designed to get teachers and students to focus on language in business.

There is also an initiative by the South Carolina Department of Commerce in collaboration with educational leaders to [map the internationally owned companies in their state and their employment numbers](#). This visual way demonstration of language needs is powerful and effective for advocacy. Follow the embedded links to see these resources and share them with colleagues, administrators, parents, and legislators.

What you can do...

Attend a chamber of commerce meeting or business roundtable event in your area and share these resources and your perspective on the value of language in business. Survey their needs and look for collaborative opportunities!

Seal of Biliteracy

Recognizing Competency and Accomplishment

“It is no exaggeration to say that bolstering foreign language education for ensuing generations is vital to our nation's economic and national security.”

Representative
Rush Holt (NJ)

Advocacy represents the strategies devised, actions taken and solutions proposed to influence decision-making at the local & state level to create positive change for people and their environment. (Wisconsin Clearinghouse for Prevention Resources)

We're on the Web!
Learn more about us and become a member at:
www.flenj.org

Over the last year, many states have begun to explore the establishment of a Seal of Biliteracy for eligible graduating high school seniors. New York, Illinois, and California have actually been able to get statewide legislation in support of this move to recognize the value of graduating with a high degree of proficiency in at least two languages.

New Jersey is beginning to pilot this program as well!! In its pilot year, qualifying students from Linden, Mahwah, Princeton, Plainfield, Perth Amboy, Vineland, and Washington Township are being recognized with a seal of biliteracy on their diplomas. This initiative is a collaboration between FLENJ and NJTESOL.

The following is a quick breakdown of the facts about the Seal of Biliteracy here in New Jersey. Use it to share with your schools and be sure to make parents aware. For additional information or to get your school involved, please contact Jean Modig at jmodigflenj@gmail.com.

What is the Seal of Biliteracy?

The Seal of Biliteracy is an award given by a school, school district or county office of education in recognition of students who have studied and attained proficiency in two or more languages by high school graduation. The Seal of Biliteracy takes the form of a gold seal that appears on the transcript or diploma of the graduating senior and is a statement of accomplishment for future employers and for college admissions.

Who is eligible?

Graduating seniors at high schools in the NJ pilot districts who submit an application demonstrating mastery of English at least one additional language through achievement of a score of proficiency on qualifying tests.

Why is the Seal of Biliteracy important?

The goal of this initiative is to elevate the perceived status of the bilingual student, thereby promoting continued language study and drawing the attention of colleges and future employers. The Seal of Biliteracy is the mark of a student developing true Global Competence.

Even More News and Resources

- Let parents know about the value of world language education. Visit our advocacy page and share resources with them. Invite a FLENJ Board member to speak to parents at a school or district event. Encourage them to join the **Parents for Language** group on Facebook to keep up to date and be a part of the discussion.
- One of our best assets as a profession is our drive to always do more and teach more effectively. Sign up for a FLENJ Professional Development workshop.
- Don't forget to utilize the excellent resources on the [NJDOE World Language Department](#) page.

Questions? Ideas? Great language advocacy stories? Contact us at www.flenj.org.

In Their Own Words...

A new section devoted to hearing the words of advocates for language education. Is there someone whose voice you would like to hear on the value of language education? Contact us at www.flenj.org



Representative Rush Holt on Language Education

“From the academic benefits – increased mental flexibility and, often, higher standardized test scores – to the professional benefits – increased competitiveness in a globalized world – foreign language education is essential to the security and prosperity of our nation.

Because many of you are on the frontlines of language instruction you also know that, despite this documented need, it has been a difficult time for foreign language instruction with state and local education budget cuts and the narrowing of school curriculums.

We, however, have the ability to make improvements. As you all know well, language learning is a long-term process. The same goes for achieving legislative goals. Continued advocacy and outreach is necessary to bring foreign language learning back to the forefront of our conversation.”



Rush Holt represents the 12th district of New Jersey in the U.S. Congress. He has represented Central Jersey in Congress since 1999. Rep. Holt sits on the House Committee on Education and Workforce and the House Committee on Natural Resources.



*Promoting excellence in world language education by advancing policy and practice
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