

119TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

H. R. 10064

To amend the Foreign Service Act of 1980 to require a list of critical foreign languages for purposes of that Act.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

AUGUST 6, 2026

Mr. OLSZEWSKI (for himself and Mr. BAUMGARTNER) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Affairs

A BILL

To amend the Foreign Service Act of 1980 to require a list of critical foreign languages for purposes of that Act.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Foreign Service Lan-
5 guage Readiness Act”.

6 **SEC. 2. LIST OF CRITICAL FOREIGN LANGUAGES.**

7 (a) IN GENERAL.—Section 701 of the Foreign Serv-
8 ice Act of 1980 (22 U.S.C. 4021) is amended by adding
9 at the end the following:

10 “(h) LIST OF CRITICAL FOREIGN LANGUAGES.—

1 “(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 180 days
2 after the date of the enactment of this subsection,
3 and not less frequently than once every three years
4 thereafter, the Secretary should designate, and make
5 available to the Committee on Foreign Affairs of the
6 House of Representatives and the Committee on
7 Foreign Relations of the Senate, a list of critical for-
8 eign languages for purposes of this Act.

9 “(2) MATTERS TO BE INCLUDED.—For each
10 critical foreign language designated pursuant to
11 paragraph (1), the Secretary shall include informa-
12 tion in the list describing—

13 “(A) minimum tested levels at which a
14 member of the Service shall be considered to be
15 proficient in the language; and

16 “(B) criteria for determining positions for
17 which such critical foreign language capability
18 is mission essential.

19 “(3) COORDINATION.—In carrying out this sub-
20 section, the Secretary shall, to the maximum extent
21 practicable, coordinate with the heads of other Fed-
22 eral departments and agencies that maintain foreign
23 language capabilities, in order to promote interoper-
24 ability, avoid duplication, and achieve cost savings to
25 the taxpayer.

1 “(4) WORKFORCE PLANNING.—The Secretary
2 should incorporate critical foreign language capa-
3 bility planning into the career development, training,
4 and assignment processes under this chapter, includ-
5 ing through—

6 “(A) the use of training at the National
7 Foreign Affairs Training Center;

8 “(B) the use of limited noncareer appoint-
9 ments and recall and reappointment authorities
10 under sections 308 and 309 to address tem-
11 porary or surge requirements; and

12 “(C) the development of a surge reserve of
13 rehired officers and other appropriately cleared
14 individuals with critical foreign language capa-
15 bilities who may be activated rapidly in re-
16 sponse to crises.

17 “(5) CRITICAL FOREIGN LANGUAGE DE-
18 FINED.—In this subsection, the term ‘critical foreign
19 language’ means a foreign language identified by the
20 Secretary, in consultation with the heads of other
21 Federal departments and agencies, as appropriate—

22 “(A) as essential to the protection of
23 United States national security interests,
24 United States economic prosperity, and the pro-
25 tection of United States citizens abroad;

1 “(B) with respect to which required levels
2 of proficiency are limited in the United States
3 workforce relative to strategic needs and oper-
4 ational demand; and

5 “(C) as corresponding to category I, II,
6 III, or IV languages, as specified in section
7 3911.2 of volume 3 of the Foreign Affairs Man-
8 ual (3 FAM 3911.2) or successor guidance, en-
9 compassing difficult, hard, and super hard lan-
10 guages that are less commonly taught or stud-
11 ied in the United States.”.

12 (b) CRITICAL FOREIGN LANGUAGE REQUIREMENT.—
13 Section 702 (22 U.S.C. 4022) is amended by adding at
14 the end the following:

15 “(c) CRITICAL FOREIGN LANGUAGE REQUIRE-
16 MENT.—In carrying out this section, the Secretary shall
17 ensure that policies for the instruction, testing, and use
18 of foreign languages explicitly support the preservation of
19 capabilities with respect to critical foreign languages iden-
20 tified pursuant to section 701(h).”.

21 (c) REPORT.—

22 (1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than December 31,
23 2027, the Secretary of State shall submit to the
24 Committee on Foreign Affairs of the House of Rep-
25 resentatives and the Committee on Foreign Rela-

1 tions of the Senate a report on the Department of
2 State's critical language capabilities.

3 (2) MATTERS TO BE INCLUDED.—The report
4 required by this subsection should include the fol-
5 lowing:

6 (A) An assessment of the Department of
7 State's critical foreign language staffing re-
8 quirements, by regional and functional bureau.

9 (B) For each critical language, numbers of
10 the Foreign Service meeting the minimum crit-
11 ical language proficiency standards, as well as
12 the criteria for determining if a critical lan-
13 guage is mission essential for a given position.

14 (C) The impact of workforce shortages on
15 the Department's ability to meet mission-essen-
16 tial critical foreign language requirements.

17 (D) Any actions taken or planned to
18 strengthen critical foreign language capability
19 in the Service.

20 (E) A list of each Service position abroad
21 that is language-designated in order to deter-
22 mine whether or not a continuing requirement
23 for foreign language proficiency for such posi-
24 tion is warranted.

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