

Study Abroad Bill Introduced in Senate — Take Action Now!

On July 26, 2006, Senators Richard Durbin (D-IL) and Norman Coleman (D-MN) introduced the Abraham Lincoln Study Abroad Act of 2006 (S. 3744), which calls for a national program to encourage study abroad.

The legislation carries on the legacy of the late Senator Paul Simon, who sought to promote peace and security through understanding and global awareness. In the weeks before his untimely death, Senator Simon wrote “This major national initiative...can lift our vision and responsiveness to the rest of the world.”



As outlined by the [Commission on the Abraham Lincoln Study Abroad Fellowship Program](#), the program will create fellowships and scholarships for individual students and establish partnerships with colleges and universities. The goal of the program is to create and sustain annual growth rates to achieve 1 million students studying abroad annually by 2016-17.

A focus of the Act is to expand study abroad opportunities to new populations, such as minorities and students with disabilities; underrepresented fields, such as science, mathematics, engineering, and business; and community colleges, minority-serving colleges, and low-income-serving institutions. In addition, the program will encourage study in non-traditional and developing countries. In his introduction to the bill, Sen. Durbin said, “Sending more American students for that overseas experience will not only help those students, it will help others around the world to see who we are.”

Finally, the Commission also calls for “the most demanding quality control” for participating programs. With this new public emphasis on quality assurance, the Forum’s role as a Standards Development Organization for the field of education abroad takes on vital importance.

What Can You Do?

- Get the word out. Forward this message to your colleagues and peers at other institutions.
- Start a letter-writing campaign. Ask your institution’s leadership, staff, and students to write letters to your senator expressing support for the bill and describing the importance of study abroad. Find your senator’s contact information here: <http://capwiz.com/nafsa/directory/congdir.tt>
- Stay informed. Check the [Forum website](#) for updates.