



CIPRIS Position Statement

Written Spring 2001

The following position statement was sent to Illinois State members of the U.S. Senate and House of Representatives on behalf of Illinois TESOL•BE by ITBE President Irene Brosnahan in April 2001. In addition, all ITBE members were encouraged to write to Congress to voice opposition to the CIPRIS legislation.

Illinois Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Language • Bilingual Education (Illinois TESOL•BE) is a non-profit professional organization of more than 1,000 members. Illinois TESOL•BE is an affiliate of Teacher of English to Speakers of Other Languages, Inc. (TESOL). Illinois TESOL•BE opposes Section 641 ("CIPRIS") of IIRAIRA (the Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act of 1996), even as amended in HR 3767, §404 in October 2000.

CIPRIS (Coordinated Interagency Partnership Regulating International Students) purports to establish a system of data collection for individuals studying in the United States. However, there has been a system in place for many years. Colleges and university have long been required to maintain records on international students and to provide information to the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) on demand. Prior to the CIPRIS legislation, groups such as NAFSA: Association of International Educators were working with the INS to develop an improved electronic collection and reporting system that would not require legislation.

CIPRIS will have a devastating impact on the vital export service sector of international education. CIPRIS will increase demands placed on students, educators, and exchange program participants. CIPRIS requirements will complicate the already rigorous visa application process and impose additional costs to visa applicants. CIPRIS gives a message that international students are not welcome in the United States.

The state of Illinois is home to a large number of immigrants, and a very high percentage of internal students come to the area because of family connections. The Network of Intensive English Programs (NIEP), based in Chicago, has close to 40 active members, all of whom are involved in the

“business” of international education, either independently or as affiliates of established educational institutions. Students in these programs come from overseas and therefore represent export dollars spent in our communities. NAFSA: Association of International Educators (www.nafsa.org/advo/econimapact.html) estimates that international students contribute at least \$12.3 billion nationally to the United States, approximately \$557,353,000 of that in the state of Illinois. These are only direct expenditures and do not consider the “multiplier effect” of the vast indirect economic impact of this population such as car rental companies, restaurants, grocery stores, health-care providers, and many other businesses sustained by the international student population.

These students, on their return to their countries, represent a powerful foreign economic and policy asset as friends of Illinois and the United States. Section 641 (CIPRIS) of IIRAIRA (the Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act of 1996), even as amended in HR 3767, §404 in October 2000, will have a disastrous impact on this sector. NAFSA predicts that between 15% and 30% of the short-term English language program population will choose other English-speaking countries (primarily Australia, Canada and the United Kingdom) if CIPRIS moves forward.

Senators John Kerry (D-Mass) and Richard G. Lugar (R-Ind) introduced a concurrent resolution in February of this year (S.Con.Res.7, February 2, 2001) “expressing the sense of Congress that the United States should establish an international education policy to enhance national security and significantly further United States foreign policy and global competitiveness, and for other purposes.” One of the objectives stated in this resolution is to “streamline visa, taxation, and employment regulations applicable to international students.” The impending CIPRIS regulations will have exactly the opposite effect: They add complexity to the visa regulation, and further damage U.S. competitiveness for international students. For the Chicago area and the entire state of Illinois, this is an extremely critical matter.

INS is forging ahead with the implementation of the CIPRIS fee rule, and intends to have it in place as soon as possible this year. It was not the intent of the original 1996 law to destroy a valuable export sector and foreign policy asset. Illinois TESOL•BE urges the 107th Congress to repeal the CIPRIS legislation before it is too late.