

State Department Training Modernization Act

Rep. Andy Kim (NJ-03) and Rep. Joaquin Castro (TX-20)

The Department of State is critical to our national security, with its employees charged with representing the American people abroad. Despite having a broad mandate in a constantly changing world, professional development programming for State Department personnel is still reliant on on-the-job training and other informal mentorship practices. These employees who serve our nation require the best possible training at every stage of their careers to prepare them to promote and defend United States interests and the safety of U.S. citizens abroad.

To meet this challenge, the **State Department Training Modernization Act** would move toward a more standardized training and professional development program that incorporates innovative education and training courses, methods, and programs. The bill also includes transparency measures to support efforts to strengthen the diversity of the State Department workforce and emphasizes the importance of linking training to equitable, accountable, and transparent promotion and leadership opportunities and assignments.

Specifically, the bill would:

- Direct the Secretary of State to offer increased training offerings, including increased virtual instruction that is interactive and more accessible to personnel deployed around the world, and increased training provided by partner organizations such as universities, industry entities, and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs).
- Create new fellowship programs for Foreign Service and Civil Service officers that include opportunities at NGOs, the Department of Defense, intelligence organizations like the Central Intelligence Agency and National Security Agency, colleges and universities, and industry entities working in technology, global operations, finance, or other fields.
- Create an independent Board of Visitors—the governing structure used by institutions of higher education—for the Foreign Service Institute (FSI), comprised of experts in management and leadership outside of the State Department to provide advice and recommendations to the Secretary of State on organizational management, strategic planning, resource management, curriculum development, and other matters of interest to the FSI.

- Establish a Provost at the Foreign Service Institute to be appointed by the Board of Visitors to directly oversee, review, and evaluate the academic curriculum for courses taught at the FSI.
- Allow other national security agencies and congressional staff to take advantage of professional development programs at the FSI.
- Improve oversight and transparency of efforts to increase the diversity of the State Department workforce by requiring annual reports to Congress to include the demographic breakdown of personnel and efforts underway in each bureau to address issues of diversity, equity, and inclusion in their work.
- Require the Secretary of State to develop a strategic plan for how to adapt and evolve training requirements to better meet the Department's current and future needs for 21st century diplomacy.
- Establish an incentive program to encourage members of the Foreign Service to maintain their foreign language proficiency.

This legislation is the House companion to S. 3492 introduced by Senators Cardin and Hagerty, which was passed unanimously by the Senate Foreign Relations Committee.