



## American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages

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February 12, 2009

The Honorable Barack Obama  
The President  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW  
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

On behalf of the more than 12,000 members of the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL), let me thank you for your very positive comments during the campaign regarding the need for Americans to learn other languages. As you already know, this is a critical issue for our country, particularly as we prepare our young people to live and work in a global economy.

ACTFL is involved in many aspects of the expansion and improvement of language learning. Along with a coalition of language organizations, we developed the teaching and learning standards for foreign language education in the 1990's. Our public relations initiatives such as *2005: The Year of Languages* and our current ongoing campaign *Discover Languages – Discover the World!* are leading efforts to communicate the power of language learning to the American public. In addition, we work extensively with the defense and intelligence agencies in language proficiency training and testing.

While we know of your support for more language education, we are concerned that foreign languages are not specifically referenced in your educational initiatives. We look forward to discussing this issue with your staff and identifying ways that we can work together to move this important agenda forward.

Again, we are energized by your commitment to language learning and that of the First Lady as evidenced in her recent visit to Mary's Center in the District when she expressed her regret at not speaking Spanish. Together we can make language learning opportunities available for all children and adults.

Sincerely,

Bret Lovejoy  
Executive Director