STATEMENT OF AFFIRMATION

I Am My Language

Whereas, the ACTFL, *formerly the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages*, was established in 1967 to advance world language education, thereby fostering linguistic and intercultural competence, research, and professional development for educators.

Whereas, the ability to communicate with respect and cultural understanding in more than one language is an essential element of human connection, global awareness, and career-readiness.

Whereas, 90% of U.S. employers rely on employees who speak more than one language.[1]

Whereas, employers consistently list *knowing more than one language* in the top 8 most requested skills.[2]

Whereas, research indicates people who know and use more than one language improve memory functions, problem solving, concentration, and creativity.[3]

Whereas, learning an additional language, or more, enhances the first language.[4]

Whereas, the ACTFL strives for equity across world language teaching and learning contexts to build a welcoming and just antiracist society.

Whereas, we affirm that all languages and varieties are equally valid, fostering an environment where linguistic diversity is celebrated and welcomed.[5]

Now, therefore, be it...

Affirmed, that the signer acknowledges the fundamental necessity of a culturally competent society that is proficient in at least one world language in addition to the dominant language of the community.

Affirmed, that the signer values the impact of language educators who strive daily to foster a language-rich, globally positioned society for the 21st Century.

Affirmed, that the signer acknowledges the inextricable link between language and culture, a link that is inherent to languages that are traditionally taught or less common, institutionally supported or not, and languages that are spoken, unspoken, or signed.

Affirmed, that the signer commits to the premise of *I Am My Language,* which is to honor both ancestral and acquired languages, to acknowledge that languages serve as a bridge to our ancestral *roots*, to celebrate the *rhythms* of our cultures, communities, and all that makes us whole, and to *resist* all forms of bias and discrimination.

Affirmed, I Am My Language!

Signature_____

Approved by the ACTFL Board of Directors February 2026

[1] ACTFL. (2019). *Making Languages Our Business: Addressing Foreign Language Demand Among U.S. Employers*. https://www.actfl.org/advocacy-and-public-education/making-languages-our-business

[2] Anderson, C., & Gantz, J. F. (2013). Skills Requirements for Tomorrow's Best Jobs: Helping Educators Provide Students with Skills and Tools They Need. IDC. https://www.rii.kz/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/idc_101513_Skills_Need_Report.pdf

[3] Cosgun, G., & Atay, D. (2021). Fostering Critical Thinking, Creativity, and Language Skills in the EFL Classroom through Problem-Based Learning. *International Journal of Curriculum and Instruction*, *13*(3), 2360, https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1312851.pdf; https://ccsenet.org/journal/index.php/elt/article/download/15947/10712

[4] Pathak, L. S., Rijal, S., & Pathak, P. (2021). Instruction in second language enhances linguistic and cognitive abilities in first language as well: evidence from public school education in Nepal. *Journal of Cultural Cognitive Science*, *5*(2), 287–310. https://doi.org/10.1007/s41809-021-00084-7; Cong, F., Zhao, C., & Chen, B. (2025). The status of the first letter improves with second language proficiency for different-script bilinguals: evidence from Chinese-English bilinguals. *International Journal of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism*, *28*(7), 726–743. https://doi.org/10.1080/13670050.2025.2468168

[5]ACTFL Position Statement, revised 2024, https://www.actfl.org/news/diversity-and-inclusion-in-world-language-teaching-learning