

## Senator Paul Simon Study Abroad Program Act of 2023 (S. 2261/H.R. 4588)

**Ask: We urge members of Congress to cosponsor and pass the Senator Paul Simon Study Abroad Program Act this year** to significantly increase the number and diversity of American students studying abroad, especially to non-traditional locations.

In today's global society, a U.S. undergraduate education that includes a meaningful study abroad experience is more important than ever. Study abroad gives students the opportunity to engage with other cultures, enhance foreign language skills, and expand international knowledge. **At the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, U.S. study abroad participation plummeted 91 percent.** While numbers rebounded following the pandemic, with nearly 189,000 U.S. students abroad in the 2021-2022 academic year, **participation remains 46 percent below pre-pandemic levels.** Increasing access to study abroad during college is critical to ensuring that U.S. students gain the skills, knowledge, and experiences necessary to succeed in tackling global challenges and navigating a worldwide economy.

The bipartisan, bicameral bill seeks to **codify and enhance the State Department's Increase and Diversify Education Abroad for U.S. Students (IDEAS) program, and formally renaming it as the "Senator Paul Simon Study Abroad Program."** Inspired by the vision of the late Senator Paul Simon of Illinois and the recommendations of the congressionally-appointed Commission on the Abraham Lincoln Study Abroad Fellowship Program, the legislation would advance four national goals:

- One million U.S. college students will study abroad annually for credit;
- Study abroad participants will more closely represent the demographics of the undergraduate population in terms of gender, ethnicity, students with disabilities, income level, and field of study;
- A significantly greater proportion of study abroad will occur in nontraditional destinations outside Western Europe; and
- Higher education institutions will make study abroad a critical component of a quality higher education.

The bill is endorsed by more than 50 U.S. organizations, including NAFSA. For more information, visit: [www.nafsa.org/simon](http://www.nafsa.org/simon)

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