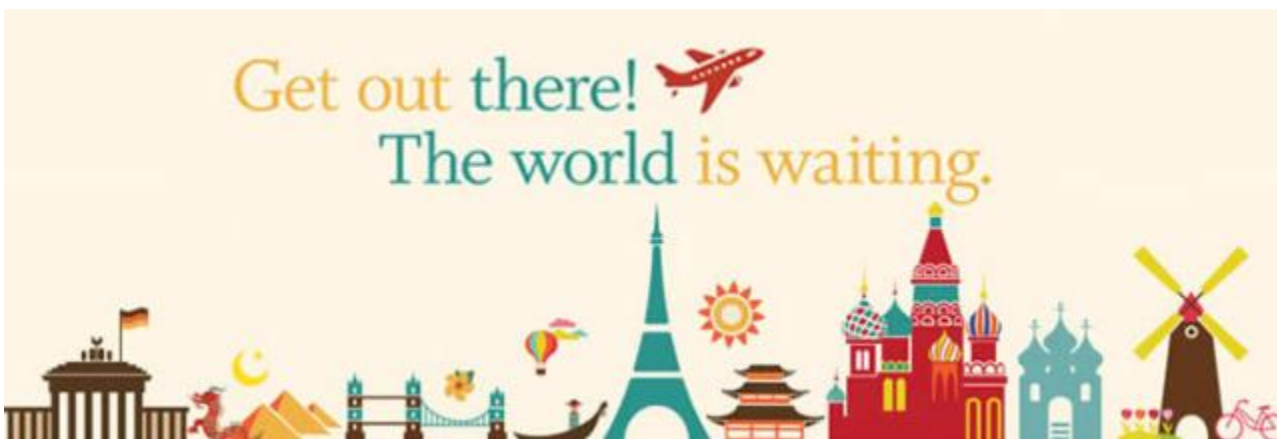


# Durbin, Wicker introduce legislation to promote study abroad

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## *Senators Say Study Abroad Prepares U.S. College Graduates to Compete Globally*

WASHINGTON – U.S. Senators Dick Durbin (D-IL) and Roger Wicker (R-MS) today introduced legislation that creates a competitive grant program for colleges and universities to expand study abroad opportunities for American college students and encourage more minority, low-income, and non-traditional students to spend part of their undergraduate experience abroad. The *Senator Paul Simon Study Abroad Program Act* seeks to bolster young Americans' foreign language skills and cultural competency. Named after the late Illinois Senator Paul Simon, who preached the value of international education as a means to strengthen the United States' position in the world, this bill aims to increase the number of undergraduate students studying abroad annually to one million within ten years. Currently, less than two percent of all enrolled post-secondary students in the U.S. study abroad.

**“Senator Paul Simon understood the importance of fostering global awareness and understanding in an increasingly complicated and interconnected world. The next generation of American leaders will have**

**to navigate a globally competitive economy and work with people from vastly different cultural backgrounds to tackle the world's problems," said Senator Durbin. "By investing in international exchange, we can better prepare our youth and our country for the world of tomorrow."**

**"Our nation benefits in the long run when students have the opportunity to study abroad," Senator Wicker said. "No one can predict what the world will look like in 10, 20, or 30 years. A better understanding of global issues and the global economy helps prepare our young leaders to succeed, regardless of what the future holds."**

Senator Durbin first introduced this legislation in 2006 as the *Abraham Lincoln Study Abroad Act* based on the recommendations of the Commission on the Abraham Lincoln Study Abroad Fellowship Program – of which Durbin was a member. Today's bill is supported by NAFSA: Association of International Educators, the Association of Public and Land-grant Universities, Partners of the Americas, the American Council on Education, the American Association of Community Colleges, the Forum on Education Abroad, the Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities, and the Association of American Universities.