

## Friis, John

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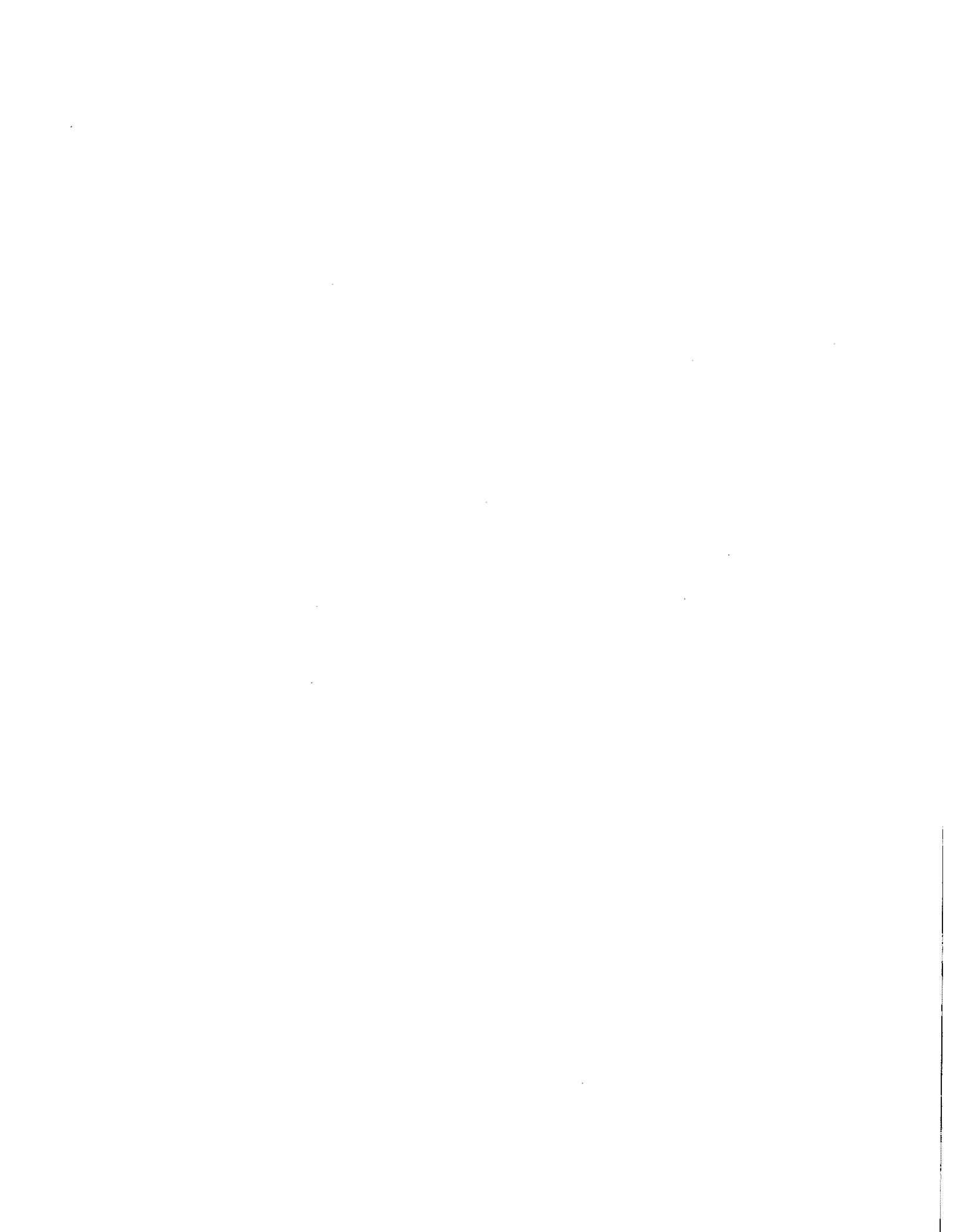
**From:** Dever, Aileen Prof. [Aileen.Dever@quinnipiac.edu]  
**Sent:** Monday, February 23, 2009 3:36 PM  
**To:** Friis, John  
**Subject:** Bill 945

Dear Education Committee Clerk John Friis:

My name is Aileen Dever and I am an Associate Professor of Spanish at Quinnipiac University in Hamden, CT. I would like to register my strong support for Bill 945. The lack of a language requirement at the secondary level could have extremely deleterious effects on the foreign language programs at colleges and universities. Most liberal arts institutions of higher education in Connecticut have a language requirement based on a student's high school record and results on a placement exam. Because of the excellent work accomplished at the elementary, middle, and secondary levels, at colleges and universities many students place into intermediate or advanced courses as first-year students. This means that early in their academic careers professors can recommend students for study-abroad opportunities and advanced-level literature and culture courses to help them to maximize fluency.

Connecticut has historically been a leader in education. If really committed to a superior education for the 21<sup>st</sup> century in which students will live and compete in a globalized world where interconnectedness is an economic reality, the state of Connecticut must articulate its strong support for learning a second language. The federal government knows that our country is lacking in the language skills that are critical to national security. The business community also realizes that to sell our products to other countries in these economically challenging times, we must be able to understand not only the language but also the culture of those to whom we are selling. Therefore, we must prepare students to live and work in a linguistically and culturally diverse world. A language requirement:

- a.) shows a resolute commitment to diversity.
- b.) recognizes that the United States has growing political, social, cultural, and economic ties to the international community.
- c.) allows that students better comprehend their own language by comparing and contrasting structures and concepts in another language, thereby increasing their cognitive and critical thinking skills.
- d.) affirms the intrinsic value of exposing students to a foreign language.
- e.) addresses the challenges of 21<sup>st</sup> century national security and global commerce. Fewer than 10% of Americans speak both their native language and a second language fluently while 52.7% of Europeans speak both their native language and a second language fluently.
- f.) acknowledges that those fluent in two languages tend to have more earning potential and more career options.
- g.) expands students' cultural, political, historical, and literary horizons.



Schools establish core requirements in such areas as foreign languages because students may not (yet) understand the importance of certain courses not only to enhance career possibilities and choices but to enrich the experience of life itself too.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Aileen Dever, Ph.D.

Associate Professor of Spanish

Modern Language Department

Quinnipiac University

Hamden, CT 06518

[Aileen.dever@quinnipiac.edu](mailto:Aileen.dever@quinnipiac.edu)