



## The 2015 Simon Award

### U.S Senator Mark Kirk, Illinois

Senator Kirk has been a champion of language education at local, state and national levels. Senator Kirk's support for issues relating to language education have been borne from a personal commitment to a variety of language and cultural experiences. As a young man, he studied at the *Universidad Nacional Autónoma de Mexico* and completed his master's work at the London School of Economics.

When interviewed for *The Language Educator*, he acknowledged the role of foreign language and cultural education as a key for economic competitiveness.

This past November, Senator Kirk together with three others signed on to a letter requesting . . .

“... that the American Academy undertake a new study to examine the nation's current capacity in languages, how a greater attention to language training can improve the education of a citizenry prepared to thrive in a multicultural society and global economy, and how such preparation influences international cooperation and diplomacy, trade and foreign investments, national security, and the ability of all Americans to enjoy a rich and meaningful life.”

Also in November, the Senator sent two of his representatives to visit the Chinese Immersion program at the Barbara B. Rose Elementary School in Barrington, Illinois

and the Senator's staff was able to experience firsthand the impact of their FLAP grant.

Senator Mark Kirk embodies the same commitment to language learners as the Award's namesake, also a U.S. Senator from Illinois.

[Watch Senator's Kirk acceptance here:](#)

