

FSA UPDATE

AAFSW PRESS RELEASE - FSA PROPOSAL

The Association of American Foreign Service Women supports the pilot project for a Foreign Service Associates Program designed by the Department of State in response to legislation introduced by Senator Mathias. The legislation, enacted on August 16, 1986, calls for pilot testing of "a feasible program in which spouses' education, training and relevant work experience can be used effectively within the mission and in the furthering of United States interests in the host country." The report on the pilot design was forwarded to Congress on January 31, 1986 and will test two methods of job enhancement for spouses: the Foreign Service Associates Program (FSA) and the Enhanced Employment Program (EEP).

The Foreign Service Associates Program has two parts: A set of full time jobs overseas will be established for which qualified Foreign Service spouses can compete. Examples include Data Retrieval Systems Manager, Assistant Budget and Fiscal Officer, Computer Systems Manager, and Assistant Cultural Exchange Officer.

A second set of jobs involve projects within the mission or the host country that advance U.S. interests. Upon approval by an interagency committee at post of such a project worked out by a spouse, the proposal will be submitted to Washington for worldwide competition from a limited pool of positions.

Competition for all FSA positions will follow regular employment practices regarding job descriptions, qualifications of candidates and hiring procedures. All FSAs will be assigned direct supervisors and will receive annual performance ratings. Employment overseas is not guaranteed. All those hired for FSA positions will enter at the FS 6/1 pay level, advancing eventually to a promotion ceiling of FS 4. Promotions within the program will occur only after three years of satisfactory employment. Any FSA wishing to enter the career Foreign Service must do so through the normal procedures.

Agencies participating in the initial phase of the project are the Department of State, the United States Information Agency, the Foreign Services of the Departments of Commerce and Agriculture, and the Military Attache program of the Department of Defense. Other agencies may join the pilot project later.

The Enhanced Employment Program complements the FSA program, envision-

ing the development of uniform dependent hire program. Participating agencies will initiate a study of the American family member employment programs currently in effect, such as PIT (part-time, intermittent, and temporary) appointments. A set of posts separate from those included in the FSA program will be designated for pilot testing of ways in which existing programs can be expanded to provide a corps of dependents skilled in nearly all field of Foreign Service work. It will explore methods of allowing participants to build seniority with respect to salary level.

The two-year pilot projects, which will be funded by participating agencies are designed to explore the effects of these programs on the ability of spouses to develop viable careers within the context of Foreign Service life, effects on the career service, the impact on morale, and benefits to the U.S. government in areas of cost-effectiveness and security.

With in-progress evaluation of the project and built-in course corrections applied during the operation of the pilot, it is anticipated that the program will be ready for worldwide application by 1990 at the latest.

February 2, 1986

Editorial Comment

The issue of spouse compensation for representation duties is to be addressed separately as it needs further time and much work until a consensus to move ahead is reached.

Due to the budgetary restrictions imposed by the Gramm-Rudman-Hollings legislation, the FSA Pilot Project will not go forward at this time.

February 14, 1986

"It seems that the challenge facing the Service is to find a way—in conjunction with spouses—to make possible exceptional opportunities for exceptional people."

RECENT NEWS ARTICLES, EDITORIALS AND LETTERS TO THE EDITOR CONCERNING THE FSA PILOT PROJECT PROPOSAL

The recent press coverage of the pilot project proposal reminds one of the old adage, "You can't mix apples and oranges." The press coverage of the pilot project has focussed upon the apples (spouse compensation) and has thrown a lesser light on informing the public about the Foreign Service Associate Proposal, the oranges. While both apples and oranges are fruit, they have distinctly different characteristics. Likewise, the two issues of spouse compensation and the career development program, (the FSA Proposal which uses a wide range of skills), are two distinctly different issues. While the FSA Pilot Project Proposal and compensation for senior spouses are both seeking pay for spouses, the FSA Pilot Project Proposal, which was forwarded to Congress on 31 January 1986, has its focus only upon the career development program leaving the very worthwhile issue of spouse compensation for representational responsibilities for a future time. The issue of pay for representational responsibilities needs further time and much work until a consensus is reached to move ahead.

John M. Goshko's article in the Washington Post of January 7, 1986 tended to cloud the two issues by stating that "The State Department is preparing to submit to Congress a proposal for a pilot project that would create 30-50 jobs for spouses abroad and that would compensate spouses of ambassadors and other senior diplomats for charitable and social work." He neglected to distinguish between career development jobs (FSA Proposal) and spouse compensation for representational duties.

His article further misleads the reader when he refers to the FSA jobs for spouses involving the "traditional-type jobs such as catering for embassy functions and health and youth care." In a Letter to the Editor, Susan Low (Chair of the FSA Study Group and Gretchen Bloom (AAFSW Program Chair) point out that "in fact, the types of jobs being discussed include assistant budget and fiscal officers, vice-consuls, assistant general service officers, program economists and computer systems managers-mainstream jobs."

The Washington Times Editorial Page, January 7, 1986, misinformed its readers in an article entitled "The Latest Scam at State." Characterizing the "pilot program proposal" as an "astonishing scam" submitted by the Office of Family Liaison, it