

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

May 16, 2025

The Honorable Mario Diaz-Balart
Chairman
Subcommittee on National Security, Dept.
Of State and Related Programs
House Committee on Appropriations
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Lois Frankel
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on National Security, Dept.
Of State and Related Programs
House Committee on Appropriations
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Diaz-Balart and Ranking Member Frankel:

Thank you for your continued support of U.S. Department of State educational and cultural exchange programs, which are a proven and cost-effective way for the United States to remain internationally competitive, advance our interests and values around the world, and make us stronger by creating future American leaders and telling America's story. These programs make America safer, stronger, and more prosperous. We request that you continue Congress' long bipartisan support for the State Department's educational and cultural exchange programs by appropriating \$741 million, keeping funding at the same level as FY25, in Fiscal Year 2026.

With Congress' support, a range of State Department exchange programs connect emerging leaders, entrepreneurs, youth, educators, and athletes from the United States to their counterparts in more than 155 countries around the world, dramatically increasing America's global reach. Exchanges are a key instrument in the U.S. foreign policy toolbox and essential to strengthening U.S. global leadership, while building respect and partnerships based on shared interests and mutual ties around the world. Results repeatedly show that participants visiting the United States through exchange programs return to their home countries with a better impression of our country, the American people, and our values. U.S. ambassadors consistently rank exchange programs among the most useful catalysts for long-term political change and mutual understanding.

Exchange programs give America greater global influence and make America safer. More than 1.7 million leaders around world are alumni of U.S. exchange programs. They know us. and want to work with us - 87% to 98% of alumni spread positive messages about their experience in the U.S. through their networks. According to the State Department, more than 660 current or former heads of government, and 42 current or former Members of Congress have been on a State Department exchange program.

Additionally, exchange programs are flexible tools to achieve the Administration's policy priorities such as creating a united and economically prosperous Western Hemisphere via exchanges with Canada, Mexico, Central America, and the Caribbean. They help America with

its strategic engagement and countering China via exchanges with Chinese students, professionals, and diplomats. Finally, through exchanges, the United States has growing influence in South America via programs with Peru, Brazil, Argentina, and more.

Exchange programs strengthen all parts of American society. Support from Congress allows the State Department to strategically align its programs with key U.S. foreign policy interests and to facilitate exchange experiences for more than 55,000 American and international exchange participants each year, including:

- Bringing emerging and future leaders – many of them from countries key to U.S. national security interests – to the U.S. on programs like the Future Leaders Exchange (FLEX) Program for high school students from Eurasia; the Kennedy-Lugar Youth Exchange and Study (YES) Program between the U.S. and countries with significant Muslim populations; the Young Leaders Initiatives in Africa, Southeast Asia, and the Americas; and the International Visitor Leadership Program (IVLP);
- Expanding opportunities for young Americans, including students receiving Pell Grants, to study abroad through the Benjamin A. Gilman International Scholarship Program;
- Engaging and training young professionals through programs such as the Congress-Bundestag Youth Exchange (CBYX); and
- Continuing to engage students and scholars through the renowned Fulbright Program.

Finally, State Department exchange programs make America more prosperous. More than 90% of the appropriation for educational and cultural exchange programs goes to American organizations, businesses, and individuals. Furthermore, exchange visitors support American businesses and local communities through their travel, hotel nights, and other expenses during their stay, and their presence at our colleges and universities support academic institutions throughout the country.

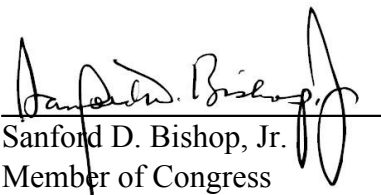
- International students studying at our colleges and universities during the 2023-24 academic year contributed \$43.8 billion to the U.S. economy (up more than \$3 billion compared to the prior academic year) and supported nearly 400,000 jobs across the country, according to NAFSA: Association of International Educators.
- 100 partner governments contribute over \$100 million annually to the Fulbright program.
- IVLP creates an 11-to-1 return on investment for American taxpayers through the generation of \$11 from American NGOs for every dollar spent by the federal government.

We respectfully request that you enable the continued success of these vital programs and appropriate no less than \$741 million for Department of State educational and cultural exchange programs in Fiscal Year 2026.

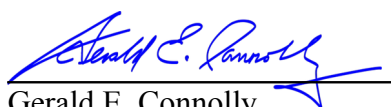
Sincerely,



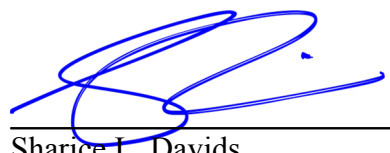
Henry C. "Hank" Johnson, Jr.
Member of Congress



Sanford D. Bishop, Jr.
Member of Congress



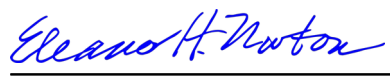
Gerald E. Connolly
Member of Congress



Sharice L. Davids
Member of Congress



Danny K. Davis
Member of Congress



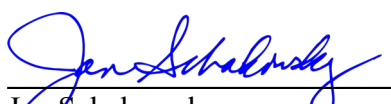
Eleanor Holmes Norton
Member of Congress



Bradley Scott Schneider
Member of Congress



Terrold Nadler
Member of Congress



Jan Schakowsky
Member of Congress



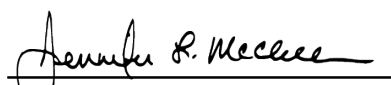
Gwen S. Moore
Member of Congress



Jasmine Crockett
Member of Congress



Dan Goldman
Member of Congress



Jennifer L. McClellan
Member of Congress



Jason Crow
Member of Congress



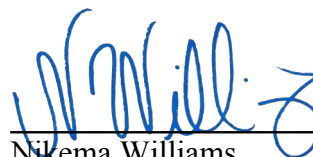
Shontel M. Brown
Member of Congress



Stephen F. Lynch
Member of Congress



Joe Courtney
Member of Congress



Nikema Williams
Member of Congress

Greg Landsman
Member of Congress



Marilyn Strickland
Member of Congress



James P. McGovern
Member of Congress



Seth Moulton
Member of Congress



Mark DeSaulnier
Member of Congress



Jahana Hayes
Member of Congress



Janelle S. Bynum
Member of Congress



Steve Cohen
Member of Congress



George Whitesides
Member of Congress



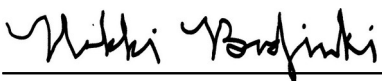
John Garamendi
Member of Congress



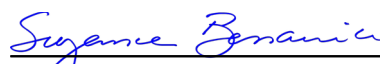
Bill Foster
Member of Congress



Mikie Sherrill
Member of Congress



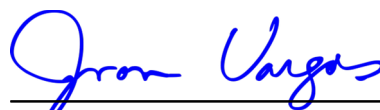
Nikki Budzinski
Member of Congress



Suzanne Bonamici
Member of Congress



Andre Carson
Member of Congress



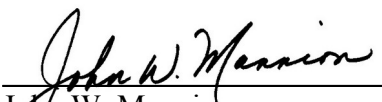
Juan Vargas
Member of Congress



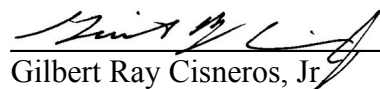
Sylvia R. Garcia
Member of Congress



Eric Swalwell
Member of Congress



John W. Mannion
Member of Congress



Gilbert Ray Cisneros, Jr.
Member of Congress



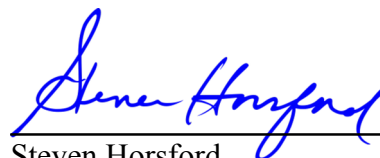
Emanuel Cleaver, II
Member of Congress



Seth Magaziner
Member of Congress



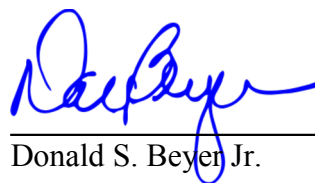
Brittany Pettersen
Member of Congress



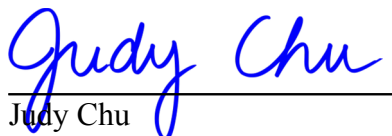
Steven Horsford
Member of Congress



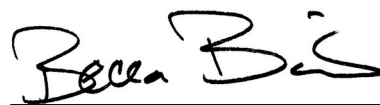
Rick Larsen
Member of Congress



Donald S. Beyer Jr.
Member of Congress



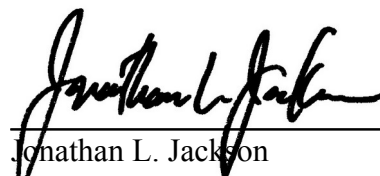
Judy Chu
Member of Congress



Becca Balint
Member of Congress



Ro Khanna
Member of Congress



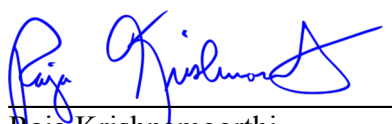
Jonathan L. Jackson
Member of Congress



Lucy McBath
Member of Congress



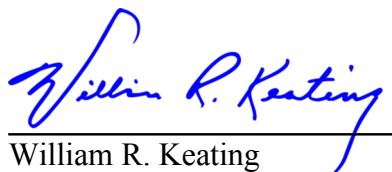
Frank Pallone, Jr.
Member of Congress



Raja Krishnamoorthi
Member of Congress



Angie Craig
Member of Congress



William R. Keating
Member of Congress




Stacey E. Plaskett
Member of Congress

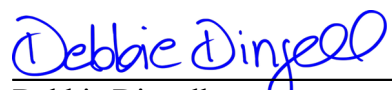



Chellie Pingree
Member of Congress



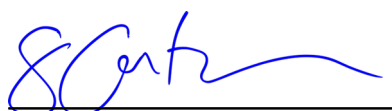
Terri A. Sewell
Member of Congress

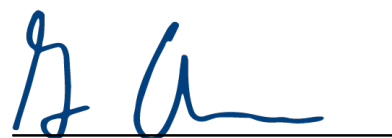

Jim Tokuda
Member of Congress



Debbie Dingell
Member of Congress



Julia Brownley
Member of Congress



Dina Titus
Member of Congress



Sean Casten
Member of Congress

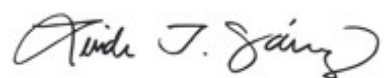

Gabe Amo
Member of Congress

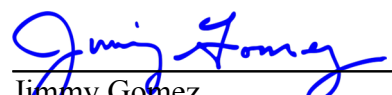

Marc A. Veasey
Member of Congress



Paul D. Tonko
Member of Congress

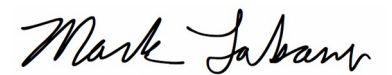

Sam T. Liccardo
Member of Congress


Jim Himes
Member of Congress


Linda T. Sánchez
Member of Congress


Jimmy Gomez
Member of Congress


Thomas R. Suozzi
Member of Congress


Mark Takano
Member of Congress



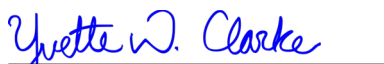
Jamie Raskin
Member of Congress



Lori Trahan
Member of Congress



Yassamin Ansari
Member of Congress



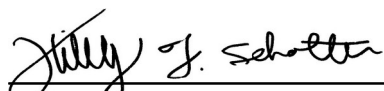
Yvette D. Clarke
Member of Congress



Ted W. Lieu
Member of Congress



Ilhan Omar
Member of Congress



Hillary J. Scholten
Member of Congress



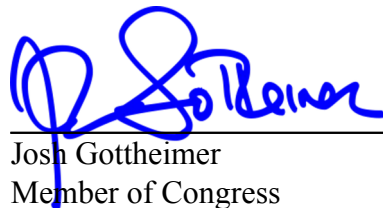
Sydney Kamlager-Dove
Member of Congress



Ami Bera, M.D.
Member of Congress



Richard E. Neal
Member of Congress



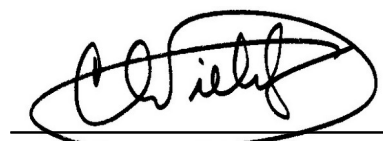
Josh Gottheimer
Member of Congress



Maggie Goodlander
Member of Congress



David Scott
Member of Congress



Cleo Fields
Member of Congress



Summer L. Lee
Member of Congress



Derek T. Tran
Member of Congress



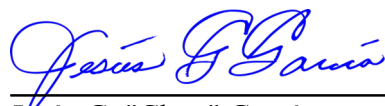
Diana DeGette
Member of Congress



Laura Friedman
Member of Congress



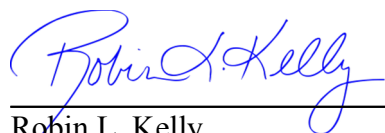
Al Green
Member of Congress



Jesús G. "Chuy" García
Member of Congress



Ayanna Pressley
Member of Congress



Robin L. Kelly
Member of Congress



Rashida Tlaib
Member of Congress



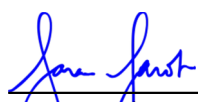
Frederica S. Wilson
Member of Congress




Gregory W. Meeks
Ranking Member
House Foreign Affairs
Committee



Dwight Evans
Member of Congress



Sara Jacobs
Member of Congress



Chrissy Houlahan
Member of Congress