

HENRY C. "HANK" JOHNSON, JR.
4TH DISTRICT, GEORGIA

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JUDICIARY
ARMED SERVICES

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-1004

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AND CAPABILITIES
STRATEGIC FORCES

March 29, 2017

The Honorable Hal Rogers
Chairman
House Appropriations Subcommittee on State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs
HT2, U.S. Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Nita M. Lowey
Ranking Member
House Appropriations Subcommittee on State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs
1016 Longworth House Office Building, Washington, D.C. 20515

Re: Department of State Educational and Cultural Exchange programs for FY 2018

Dear Chairman Rogers and Ranking Member Lowey:

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, develop American leaders, engage current and future international leaders, and promote American values. These programs support global engagement that is critical to our country's prosperity and security.

In the 114th Congress the exceptional range of State Department exchange programs has continued to expand. Through professional, academic, cultural, and athletic exchanges, these programs reach emerging leaders, entrepreneurs, youth, students, educators, artists, and athletes in the United States and more than 160 countries around the world, dramatically increasing America's global reach.

An appropriation of approximately \$600 million annually since FY 2011 has allowed the Department of State to strategically align its programs with key U.S. foreign policy interests and to facilitate exchange experiences for approximately 350,000 American and international exchange participants, including:

- Bringing emerging and future leaders – many of them from countries key to U.S. foreign policy interests – to the U.S. on programs like the International Visitor Leadership Program (IVLP), the Young African Leaders Initiative (YALI), the Kennedy-Lugar Youth Exchange and Study (YES) Program, and the Future Leaders Exchange (FLEX) Program;
- Continuing to engage students and scholars through the renowned Fulbright Program;

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- Engaging and training young professionals through programs such as the Congress-Bundestag Youth Exchange (CBYX);
- Expanding opportunities for young Americans to study and research abroad;
- Broadening engagement with youth, women and girls, as well as program alumni; and
- Expanding the virtual exchanges portfolio, allowing for a strong public diplomacy impact on a growing audience worldwide.

We respectfully request that you enable the continued success of these vital programs and appropriate the highest possible funding level for Department of State educational and cultural exchange programs in FY 2018.

Exchanges are imperative for U.S. national security

State Department exchange programs allow the U.S. to engage with a diverse audience and emerging leaders from around the world, many of them from countries key to our national security interests. Exchanges are a key instrument in the U.S. foreign policy toolbox and essential to strengthening U.S. global leadership, while building respect and a web of partnerships based on shared interests and mutual ties around the world.

American students studying abroad through State Department exchange programs are ambassadors of the next generation of American leaders, showcasing our most promising young people and promoting American values around the world. State Department evaluations repeatedly show that international exchange participants who visit the United States complete their programs with a better impression of our country, the American people, and our values. U.S. ambassadors around the globe consistently rank exchange programs among the most useful catalysts for long-term political change and mutual understanding.

Chinese President Xi Jinping's return visit to Muscatine, Iowa in 2012 – where he did a family home stay in 1985 while on a State Department exchange – demonstrates the importance of cultivating relationships with current and future foreign leaders through these programs. Exchange program alumni include almost 565 current and former Heads of State, more than 1,700 cabinet-level ministers, and key leaders from around the world such as Managing Director of the International Monetary Fund Christine LaGarde; the first Arab woman to receive the Nobel Peace Prize, Tawakul Karman; former Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh; and former French President Nicolas Sarkozy, to name just a few. 89 members of the 114th U.S. Congress participated in the Department of State's International Exchange Program, in addition to 82 Nobel Prize winners and 88 Pulitzer Prize winners.

Exchanges benefit Americans and help keep America competitive

State Department exchanges provide opportunities for Americans – as exchange participants and as hosts – to build international experience and connections, expand their global perspective, and gain cross-cultural skills necessary for success in the global marketplace, including expertise in languages critical to business and national security and the establishment of key relationships around the world. State Department exchanges facilitate the development of a substantial cohort

of Americans who have the skills, knowledge, and contacts to navigate effectively across cultures and economies.

Exchanges are a cost-effective investment that brings resources to U.S. communities

State Department exchange programs are a cost-effective investment that not only enhances America's long-term competitiveness but also provides significant and immediate economic impact in communities across the country. Most of the State Department exchanges budget is spent either on Americans, American businesses and organizations, or in the United States. International students contributed approximately \$30.5 billion to the U.S. economy in the academic year 2014-2015, according to NAFSA: Association of International Educators and the Institute of International Education. They do business with U.S. small businesses, airlines, hotels, and non-governmental organizations in local communities, and their presence at our colleges and universities supports academic institutions throughout the country.

We respectfully ask that you make a smart and effective investment in our country's foreign policy as well as local communities across the United States by funding Department of State international exchange programs at the highest possible funding level in FY 2018.

Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,



Henry C. "Hank" Johnson Jr.
Members of Congress



Alma S. Adams, Ph.D.
Member of Congress



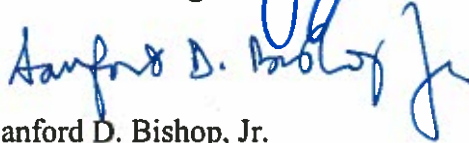
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John Conyers, Jr

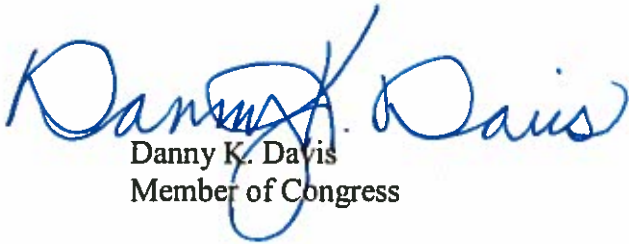
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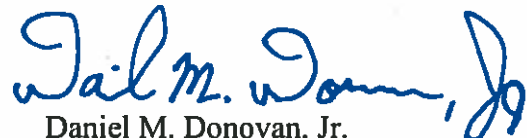

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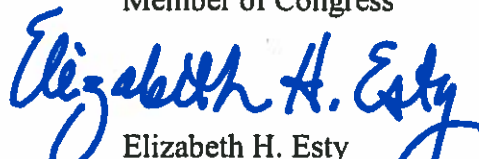

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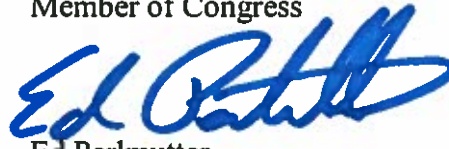
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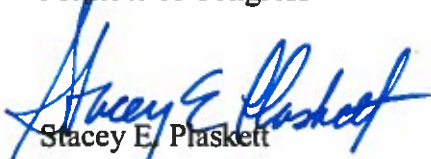
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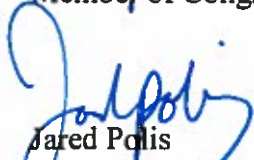
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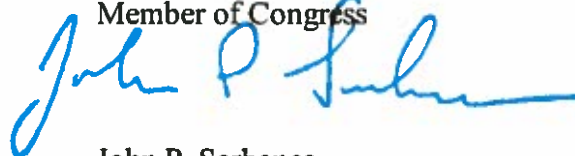
Lucille Roybal-Allard
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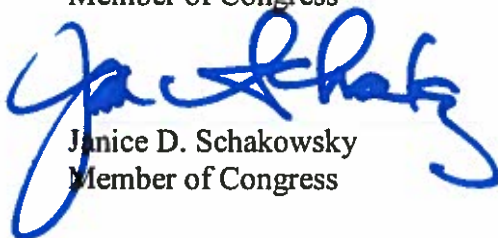
Bobby L. Rush
Member of Congress



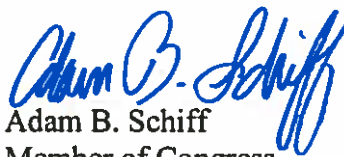
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