



July 20, 2020

President Donald J. Trump
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. President:

We are former United States Ambassadors to countries around the world. We are opposed to the inclusion of certain J-1 Exchange Visitor Programs in the June 22 Presidential proclamation suspending some nonimmigrant visas and request that the Administration use the 30-day review required by the proclamation to enable these programs to continue.

We have seen first-hand the important role that international exchange programs play in our nation's diplomatic efforts. The Exchange Visitor Program enhances U.S. national security and prosperity by building productive partnerships, mutual understanding, and personal connections that help us address critical international issues, while strengthening the U.S. economy. Seventy-five percent of cultural exchange participants, on average, developed a more positive opinion of the U.S. after their program experience. Many become community, business, and political leaders when they return home. Their understanding and affinity for the United States supports our diplomatic efforts worldwide, especially in countries that are critical to our national security.

It is also important that we position Americans to be competitive and succeed in today's connected economy. This includes equipping them with foreign language skills and cultural awareness. American hosts of Exchange Visitor Program participants develop a familiarity with a different culture and language, which can benefit them professionally in the future. Moreover, J-1 cultural exchange programs contribute more than \$1.4 billion to the American economy each year.

The power and reach of international exchange programs is widely recognized. As such, exchange programs should be exempt from the proclamation given their role in supporting our diplomatic and national security efforts, in addition to their economic benefits.

Sincerely,

Amb. (ret.) Frank Almaguer *Ambassador to the Republic of Honduras, 1999-2002*

Amb. (ret.) Mark Asquino *Ambassador to the Republic of Equatorial Guinea, 2012-2015*

Amb. (ret.) Robert Barry *Ambassador to the Republic of Bulgaria, 1981-1984 and to the Republic of Indonesia, 1992-1995*

Amb. (ret.) Michael Battle *Ambassador to the African Union, 2009-2013*

Amb. (ret.) Jack Binns *Ambassador to the Republic of Honduras, 1980-1981*

Amb. (ret.) Parker Borg *Ambassador to the Republic of Mali, 1981-1984 and to the Republic of Iceland, 1993-1996*

Amb. (ret.) A. Peter Burleigh *Ambassador for Counter-Terrorism, 1990-1992, Ambassador to the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka and the Republic of Maldives, 1995-1997 and Ambassador and Deputy Permanent Representative to the United Nations, 1997-1999*

Amb. (ret.) Brian Carlson *Ambassador to the Republic of Latvia, 2001-2005*

Amb. (ret.) Asif Chaudhry *Ambassador to the Republic of Moldova, 2008-2011*

Amb. (ret.) Peter Chaveas *Ambassador to the Republic of Malawi, 1994-1997 and to the Republic of Sierra Leone, 2001-2004*

Amb. (ret.) James F. Collins *Ambassador to the Russian Federation, 1997-2001 and Ambassador-at-Large for the New Independent States, 1995-1997*

Amb. (ret.) John Dinger *Ambassador to Mongolia, 2000-2003*

Amb. (ret.) William Eaton *Ambassador to the Republic of Panama, 2005-2008*

Amb. (ret.) Wesley Egan *Ambassador to the Republic of Guinea-Bissau, 1983-1985 and to the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, 1993-1998*

Amb. (ret.) Gregory Engle *Ambassador to the Togolese Republic, 2003-2005*

Amb. (ret.) Robert Finn *Ambassador to the Republic of Tajikistan, 1998-2001 and to Afghanistan, 2002-2003*

Amb. (ret.) Robert Gosende *Special Envoy for the Federal Republic of Somalia with the personal rank of Ambassador, 1992-1993*

Amb. (ret.) Gary Grappo *Ambassador to the Sultanate of Oman, 2006-2009*

Amb. (ret.) Franklin Huddle *Ambassador to the Republic of Tajikistan, 2001-2003*

Amb. (ret.) William Itoh *Ambassador to the Kingdom of Thailand, 1995-1999*

Amb. (ret.) Janice Jacobs *Ambassador to the Republic of Senegal and the Republic of Guinea-Bissau, 2006-2007*

Amb. (ret.) Dennis Jett *Ambassador to the Republic of Mozambique, 1993-1996 and to the Republic of Peru, 1996-1999*

Amb. (ret.) Theodore Kattouf *Ambassador to the United Arab Emirates, 1998-2001 and to the Syrian Arab Republic, 2001-2003*

Amb. (ret.) Jackson McDonald *Ambassador to the Republic of The Gambia, 2001-2004 and to the Republic of Guinea, 2004-2007*

Amb. (ret.) Michael Michalak Ambassador to APEC, 2005-2007 and to the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, 2007-2011

Amb. (ret.) Richard Miles Ambassador to the Republic of Azerbaijan, 1992-1993, to the Republic of Bulgaria, 1999-2002, and to Georgia, 2002-2005

Amb. (ret.) Patrick Moon Ambassador to Bosnia and Herzegovina, 2010-2013

Amb. (ret.) Joseph Mussomeli Ambassador to the Kingdom of Cambodia, 2005-2008 and to the Republic of Slovenia, 2010-2015

Amb. (ret.) Vernon Penner Ambassador to the Republic of Cape Verde, 1986-1990

Amb. (ret.) June Perry Ambassador to the Kingdom of Lesotho, 2004-2007 and to the Republic of Sierra Leone, 2007-2010

Amb. (ret.) Charles Ray Ambassador to the Kingdom of Cambodia, 2002-2005 and to the Republic of Zimbabwe, 2009-2012

Amb. (ret.) Thomas B. Robertson Ambassador to the Republic of Slovenia, 2004-2007

Amb. (ret.) Richard Schmierer Ambassador to the Sultanate of Oman, 2009-2012

Amb. (ret.) Stephen Seche Ambassador to the Republic of Yemen, 2007-2010

Amb. (ret.) Theodore Sedgwick Ambassador to the Slovak Republic, 2010-2015

Amb. (ret.) Alan Solomont Ambassador to the Kingdom of Spain and the Principality of Andorra, 2009-2013

Amb. (ret.) J. Curtis Struble Ambassador to the Republic of Peru, 2004-2007

Amb. (ret.) Joseph Sullivan Ambassador to the Republic of Angola, 1998-2001 and to the Republic of Zimbabwe, 2001-2004

Amb. (ret.) George Trail Ambassador to the Republic of Malawi, 1988-1991

Amb. (ret.) Alexander Vershbow Ambassador to NATO, 1997-2001, to the Russian Federation, 2001-2005 and to the Republic of Korea, 2005-2008

Amb. (ret.) Marcelle Wahba Ambassador to the United Arab Emirates, 2001-2004

Amb. (ret.) Earl Anthony Wayne Ambassador to the Argentine Republic, 2006-2009 and to the United Mexican States, 2011-2015

Amb. (ret.) Laurence Wohlers Ambassador to the Central African Republic, 2010-2013

Amb. (ret.) Johnny Young Ambassador to the Republic of Sierra Leone, 1989-1992, to the Togolese Republic, 1994-1997, to the Kingdom of Bahrain, 1997-2001, and to the Republic of Slovenia, 2001-2004