



## **Ensure the lasting impact of Department of State BridgeUSA Exchange Programs**

Retain the Exchange Visitor Program provision in FY2024 and FY2025  
State-Foreign Operations appropriations bills

The Alliance for International Exchange thanks Congress for protecting the U.S. Department of State's BridgeUSA programs (also known as the Exchange Visitor Program) in enacted appropriations bills for the past five years. Since FY2018, these bills have included a provision reflecting strong support for BridgeUSA exchange programs that are vital to U.S. national security and our economy.

The provision contains specific requirements that BridgeUSA must remain the same as currently enacted in the Mutual Educational and Cultural Exchange Act of 1961, unless the U.S. Department of State goes through a transparent, formal rulemaking process and actively consults with Congress.

This regulatory process allows stakeholders to comment on proposed changes and their impact on our national security and regional economies, while also requiring the Department to address the concerns raised. Further, the appropriations bills have required the Department of State to consult with Congress before implementing any changes to BridgeUSA programs, and to justify to Congress how such changes would "affect the public diplomacy goals of, and the estimated economic impact on, the United States."

**The Alliance strongly encourages House and Senate appropriators to continue their support of these critical programs and retain the Exchange Visitor Program provision in FY2024 and FY2025 enacted appropriations bills.**