

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

May 13, 2024

The Honorable Christopher Coons  
Chairman  
Subcommittee on the Department of State,  
Foreign Operations, and Related Programs  
Senate Committee on Appropriations  
127 Senate Dirksen Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Lindsey Graham  
Ranking Member  
Subcommittee on the Department of State,  
Foreign Operations, and Related Programs  
Senate Committee on Appropriations  
125 Senate Hart Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Coons and Ranking Member Graham:

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 the global engagement that is critical to our country's prosperity and security. We request that you continue Congress' long bipartisan support for the State Department's educational and cultural exchange programs by appropriating no less than the Fiscal Year 2023 enacted level in Fiscal Year 2025.

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 160 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.

To date, there are more than one million alumni of State Department exchange programs, including hundreds of world leaders, 123 Pulitzer Prize winners, and 87 Nobel Laureates. According to the State Department, more than 720 current or former heads of government, 75 current or former representatives to the United Nations, 39 current or former heads of international organizations, and 42 current Members of Congress have been on a State Department exchange program. 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);

- Supporting international innovation and collaboration in technology through programs like TechWomen and TechGirls;
- 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.

State Department exchange programs are a cost-effective investment that provides significant and immediate economic impact in communities across the country. More than 90% of the budget 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 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 2022-2023 academic year contributed \$40.1 billion to the U.S. economy (up more than \$6.3 billion compared to the prior academic year) and supported more than 365,000 jobs across the country, according to NAFSA: Association of International Educators.

We respectfully request that you enable the continued success of these vital programs and appropriate no less than the Fiscal Year 2023 enacted level for Department of State educational and cultural exchange programs in Fiscal Year 2025.

Sincerely,



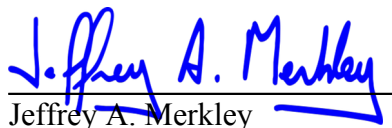
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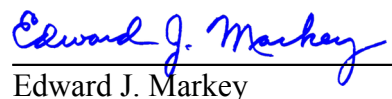
Cory A. Booker  
United States Senator





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John Hickenlooper  
United States Senator

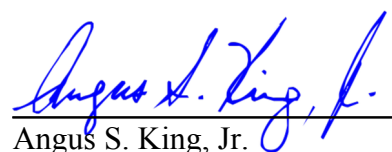
  
Jeffrey A. Merkley  
United States Senator

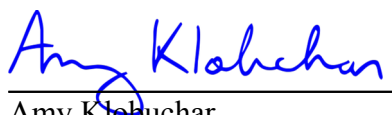
  
Edward J. Markey  
United States Senator


  
Jack Reed  
United States Senator

  
Sheldon Whitehouse  
United States Senator

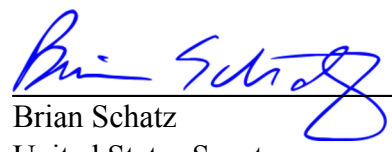
  
Sherrod Brown  
United States Senator

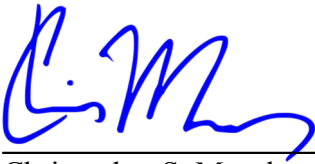
  
Angus S. King, Jr.  
United States Senator

  
Amy Klobuchar  
United States Senator

  
Tina Smith  
United States Senator

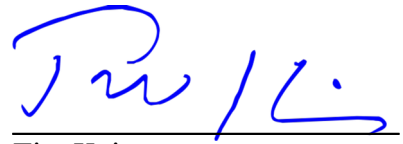
  
Mazie K. Hirono  
United States Senator

  
Brian Schatz  
United States Senator



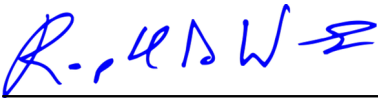
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Christopher S. Murphy  
United States Senator



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Tim Kaine  
United States Senator



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Raphael Warnock  
United States Senator



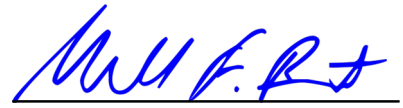
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Alex Padilla  
United States Senator



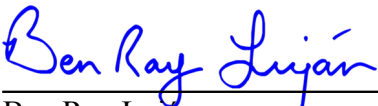
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Thomas R. Carper  
United States Senator



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Michael F. Bennet  
United States Senator



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Ben Ray Lujan  
United States Senator



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Elizabeth Warren  
United States Senator



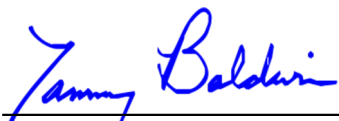
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Maria Cantwell  
United States Senator



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Kirsten Gillibrand  
United States Senator



Tammy Baldwin  
United States Senator



Jeanne Shaheen  
United States Senator



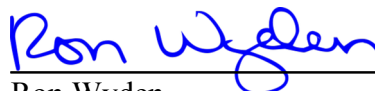
Mark Kelly  
United States Senator



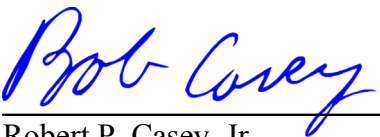
Jacky Rosen  
United States Senator



Peter Welch  
United States Senator



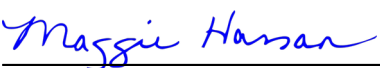
Ron Wyden  
United States Senator



Robert P. Casey, Jr.  
United States Senator



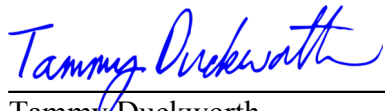
Richard Blumenthal  
United States Senator



Margaret Wood Hassan  
United States Senator



Chris Van Hollen  
United States Senator



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Tammy Duckworth  
United States Senator



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Robert Menendez  
United States Senator



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Bernard Sanders  
United States Senator



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Jon Ossoff  
United States Senator