

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20510

March 24, 2023

The Honorable Mario Diaz-Balart
Chairman
Subcommittee on State, Foreign Operations,
and Related Programs
House Committee on Appropriations
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Barbara Lee
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on State, Foreign Operations,
and Related Programs
House Committee on Appropriations
Washington, D.C. 20515

Re: U.S. Department of State Educational and Cultural Exchange Programs for Fiscal Year 2024

Dear Chairman Diaz-Balart and Ranking Member Lee:

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. We respectfully request that you enable the continued success of these vital programs and appropriate \$855 million or the highest possible funding level for U.S. Department of State educational and cultural exchange programs in Fiscal Year 2024.

Through professional, academic, cultural, and athletic exchanges, these programs reach emerging leaders, entrepreneurs, youth, students, educators, and athletes in the United States and more than 160 countries around the world, dramatically increasing America's global reach. According to the State Department, more than 590 current or former heads of government, 64 representatives to the United Nations, 31 heads of international organizations, and 97 current or former 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 and oversee exchange experiences for more than 55,000 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;
- 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.

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, highlighting 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 world consistently rank exchange programs among the most useful catalysts for long-term political change and mutual understanding.

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 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. More than 90% of the State Department exchanges budget is spent either on Americans, American businesses and organizations, or in the United States. International students studying at our colleges and universities during the 2021-2022 academic year contributed \$33.8 billion to the U.S. economy (up more than \$5.5 billion compared to the prior academic year) and supported more than 335,000 jobs across the country, according to NAFSA: Association of International Educators. They do business with American small businesses, airlines, hotels, and nongovernmental organizations in local communities, and their presence at our colleges and universities supports academic institutions throughout the country.

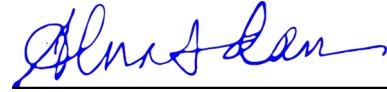
We respectfully request that you make a smart and effective investment in our country’s foreign policy, as well as local communities across the United States, by funding U.S. Department of State educational and cultural exchange programs at \$855 million or the highest possible funding level in Fiscal Year 2024.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



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



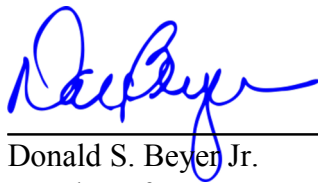
Alma S. Adams, Ph.D.
Member of Congress



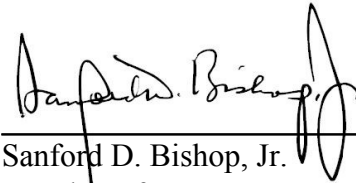
Colin Z. Allred
Member of Congress



Ami Bera, M.D.
Member of Congress



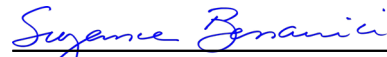
Donald S. Beyer Jr.
Member of Congress



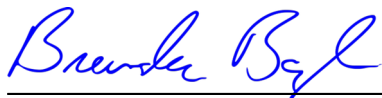
Sanford D. Bishop, Jr.
Member of Congress




Lisa Blunt Rochester
Member of Congress



Suzanne Bonamici
Member of Congress



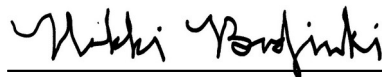
Brendan F. Boyle
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Shontel M. Brown
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Julia Brownley
Member of Congress



Nikki Budzinski

André Carson

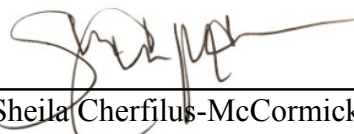
André Carson
Member of Congress



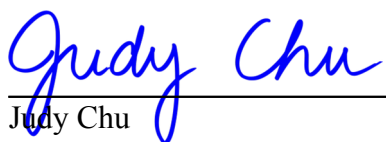
Troy Carter
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Joaquin Castro
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Sheila Cherfilus-McCormick
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Judy Chu
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David N. Cicilline
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Yvette D. Clarke
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Emanuel Cleaver, II
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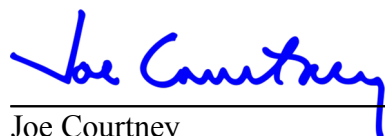
Steve Cohen
Member of Congress



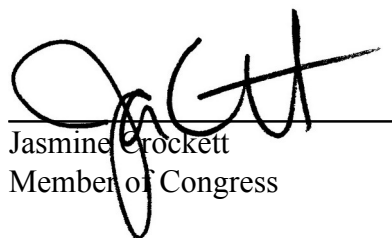
Gerald E. Connolly
Member of Congress



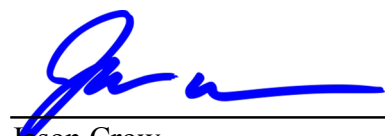
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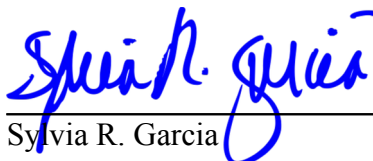
Dwight Evans
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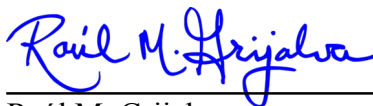
John Garamendi
Member of Congress



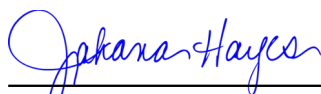
Sylvia R. Garcia
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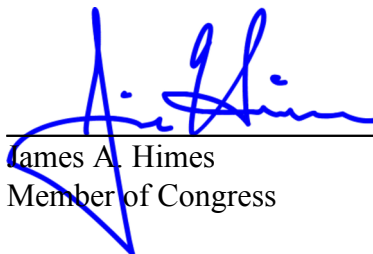
Al Green
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Sheila Jackson Lee
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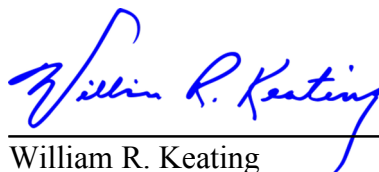
Jonathan L. Jackson
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Pramila Jayapal
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Raja Krishnamoorthi
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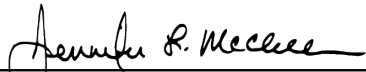
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Lucy McBath
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Jennifer L. McClellan
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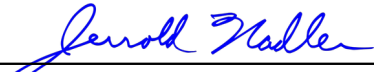
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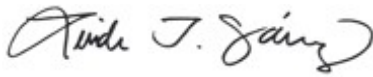
Ayanna Pressley
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Sablan
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Linda T. Sánchez
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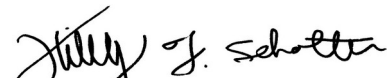
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Bradley Scott Schneider
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Hillary J. Scholten
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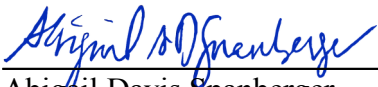
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Adam Smith
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Abigail Davis Spanberger
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Marilyn Strickland
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Eric Swalwell
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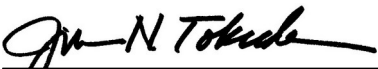
MARK TAKANO
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Glenn "GT" Thompson
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Dina Titus
Member of Congress



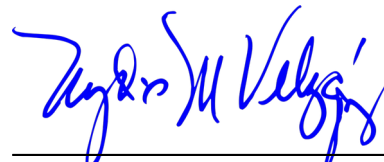
JM Tokuda
Member of Congress



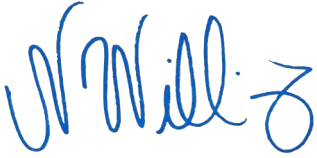
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Juan Vargas
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Nydia M. Velázquez
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Nikema Williams
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Frederica S. Wilson
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