

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

June 9, 2017

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

Dear President Trump,

We write today to express our concerns with the severe cuts to international affairs programs proposed in your Fiscal Year (FY) 2018 budget, which reflects a foreign policy that could have severe consequences for our national security.

On February 27, 2017, 121 retired three- and four-star generals sent a letter¹ to congressional leadership stating, “[w]e know from our service in uniform that many of the crises our nation faces do not have military solutions alone,” and “[t]he military will lead the fight against terrorism on the battlefield, but it needs strong civilian partners in the battle against the drivers of extremism – lack of opportunity, insecurity, injustice, and hopelessness.” We could not agree more. The United States’ diplomatic efforts and its support for organizations that share and promote our ideals are vital to the work of our military and our national security.

The United States has been a leader in global humanitarian and development efforts, ensuring stability in regions around the world. We must continue to provide strong support in improving global health and combatting epidemics like HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, and malaria. We must also continue to support the development of democratic governance and modern infrastructure to increase the quality of life for people around the world.

Our foreign policy benefits greatly when we bring people together for educational, cultural, and policy exchanges. Non-profits, such as the Asia Foundation and the East-West Center, are critical in providing additional capacity, expertise, and perspectives in how the United States can effectively expand our influence and achieve our goals abroad. Supporting these efforts provide immeasurable value to our partner nations, and to us.

Peace should be our foreign policy’s focus, and the United States has always led by example. In fact, it was President Woodrow Wilson whose idea it was to create the League of Nations – the predecessor for the United Nations, an international organization whose mission is to promote international cooperation and peace. It is more important than ever that we work together with international organizations and the international community to combat new, emerging threats.


¹ http://www.usglc.org/downloads/2017/02/FY18_International_Affairs_Budget_House_Senate.pdf

We were initially encouraged by Department of State Secretary Rex Tillerson's statement that he believed this budget would "make the U.S. government leaner and more accountable to the American taxpayer, **while maximizing our diplomatic and engagement efforts**,² including with our international problems." In fact, your FY 2018 budget does not maximize our diplomatic and engagement efforts, it curtails them.

The strongest support we can provide to ease the burden on our military and improve our domestic security is the investment we make in developing trust, goodwill, and influence abroad through the hard work of public diplomacy. Diplomacy is a soft power that can have a reach beyond the military's sphere of influence and can create and promote long-term, positive change.

We look forward to working with you on how we can provide our military the resources necessary to successfully overcome the world's threats, and urge you to consider the invaluable support that international affairs programs contribute to this effort.

Sincerely,



Colleen Hanabusa
Member of Congress



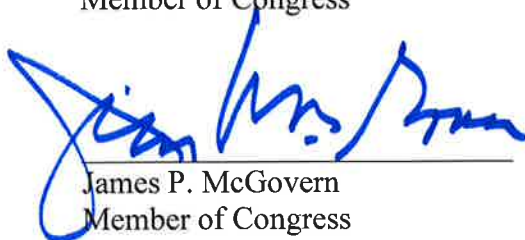
Dina Titus
Member of Congress



Alcee L. Hastings
Member of Congress



Jackie Speier
Member of Congress



James P. McGovern
Member of Congress



Jerry McNerney
Member of Congress



Bobby Rush
Member of Congress




Jacky Rosen
Member of Congress

² Emphasis added



Ruben Gallego
Member of Congress



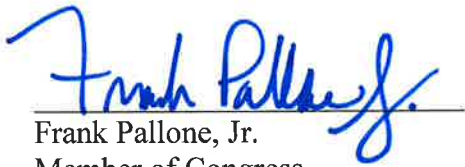
Jamie Raskin
Member of Congress



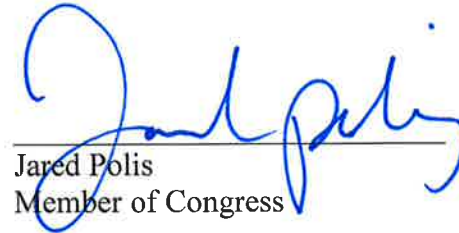
Carol Shea-Porter
Member of Congress



John Yarmuth
Member of Congress



Frank Pallone, Jr.
Member of Congress



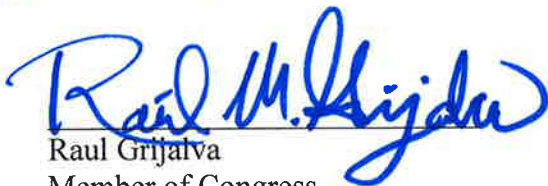
Jared Polis
Member of Congress



Zoe Lofgren
Member of Congress



Judy Chu
Member of Congress



Raul Grijalva
Member of Congress



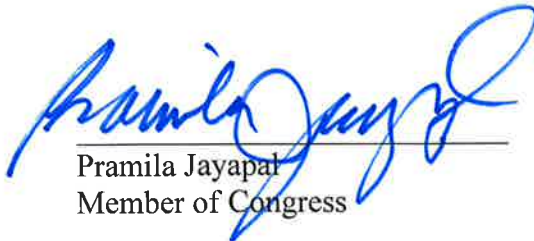
Tim Walz
Member of Congress



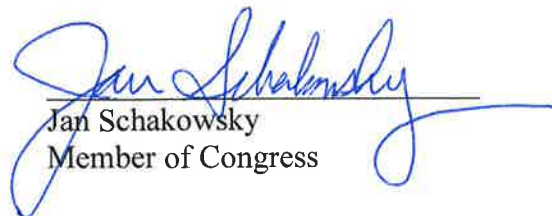
Jimmy Panetta
Member of Congress



Donald Beyer
Member of Congress



Pramila Jayapal
Member of Congress



Jan Schakowsky
Member of Congress



Adriano Espaillat
Member of Congress



Hank Johnson
Member of Congress



Betty McCollum
Member of Congress



Tulsi Gabbard
Member of Congress



Adam B. Schiff
Member of Congress



Keith Ellison
Member of Congress

cc: Secretary Rex Tillerson, Department of State
The Honorable Ed Royce, Chairman, House Committee on Foreign Affairs
The Honorable Eliot Engel, Ranking Member, House Committee on Foreign Affairs
The Honorable Rodney Frelinghuysen, Chairman, House Committee on Appropriations
The Honorable Nita Lowey, Ranking Member, House Committee on Appropriations and Subcommittee on State, Foreign Operations, and Related Agencies, House Committee on Appropriations
The Honorable Hal Rogers, Chairman, Subcommittee on State, Foreign Operations, and Related Agencies, House Committee on Appropriations