

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

June 13, 2014

The Honorable Bob Goodlatte
Chairman, Committee on the Judiciary
2138 Rayburn House Office Building
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Ed Royce
Chairman, Committee on Foreign Affairs
2170 Rayburn House Office Building
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairmen Goodlatte and Royce:

We applaud your efforts to address the problems of human trafficking, and stand committed to assisting you in that effort. As we address this critical problem, we believe that including the J-1 visa Exchange Visitor Program (EVP), and specifically the Summer Work and Travel (SWT) program, in such anti-trafficking initiatives is unnecessary and will cause significant harm to our country's public diplomacy programs. In that context, we are grateful that you have delayed consideration of H.R. 4586, the revised version of the Fraudulent Overseas Recruiting and Trafficking Elimination Act of 2014.

We request you place in H.R. 4586 (or any future versions of this bill) an explicit exemption of J-1 visa Exchange Visitor Programs, to ensure that this anti-trafficking legislation does not undermine our nation's valuable cultural exchange programs.

The J-1 Exchange Visitor Program as a whole, and the SWT program in particular, are not foreign labor activities; they are cultural exchange programs. These exchange programs provide our country's broadest reach to young people around the world, including women, minorities, and those located outside of major cities. A work component is included in the program model to help exchange visitors defray their living and travel expenses with their earnings in the U.S. It is important to note that the majority of wages earned by Summer Work Travel program participants go back into local economies in the U.S. for rent, food, entertainment, and retail purchases.

The young people participating in the SWT program represent an international demographic that is key to U.S. foreign policy interests: educated, motivated university students who will become leaders in their own societies. Without the program, they would be unable to fund a trip to learn about and experience life in the United States. Their interests, aspirations, and intent – and our

nation's interest in their participation – differ dramatically from people who come to the U.S. through foreign labor activities.

J-1 exchange programs are currently, and should continue to be, regulated by the Department of State alone. Transferring regulatory authority to either the Department of Homeland Security or the Department of Labor would add unnecessary regulatory complexity by involving agencies not responsible for advancing our nation's public diplomacy goals. The State Department's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs effectively monitors program quality and the performance of U.S. sponsor organizations, and works to ensure the quality of participant experiences. The Department has substantially strengthened its regulation and oversight of SWT since 2010, and will continue to do so with more rulemakings this year. We strongly support the great strides the Department has made to ensure that all students have a safe and enjoyable exchange experience in the U.S.

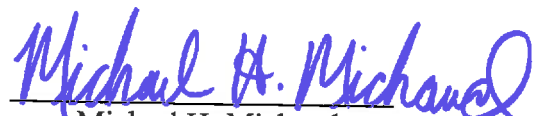
Extending a prohibition of program fees to J-1 exchange programs, even the limited fee prohibition in H.R. 4586, would effectively end the SWT program, along with several other EVP program categories. Program fees are the only funding source for the quality cultural exchange operations and a high level of support provided to participants. Program fees are used to meet federal regulatory requirements that enhance program quality and student safety, including U.S. health insurance for all participants, a 24/7 help line, monthly support check-ins, and vetting of host employers. All of these activities directly support participant health, safety and welfare, and reduce the likelihood of trafficking. The job vetting and placement support that ensures every participant has a safe and appropriate experience could no longer take place without fees.

We appreciate your support for international exchange programs, and urge you to resist any provisions that would diminish the effectiveness and impact of the Exchange Visitor Program.

Sincerely,



Frank A. LoBiondo
Member of Congress



Michael H. Michaud
Member of Congress



William L. Owens
Member of Congress



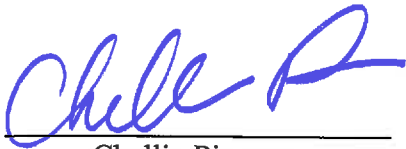
Collin C. Peterson
Member of Congress



Carol Shea-Porter
Member of Congress



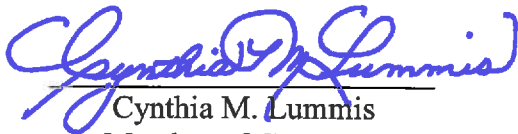
Mark Pocan
Member of Congress



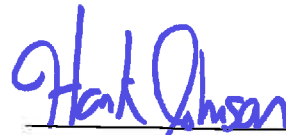
Chellie Pingree
Member of Congress



Rush Holt
Member of Congress



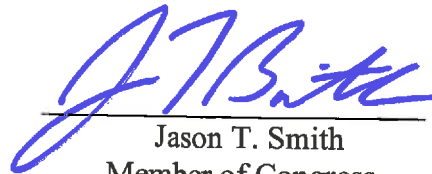
Cynthia M. Lummis
Member of Congress



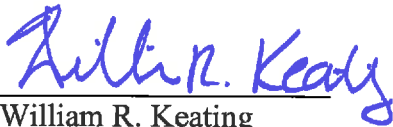
Henry C. "Hank" Johnson Jr.
Member of Congress



Steve Southerland, II
Member of Congress



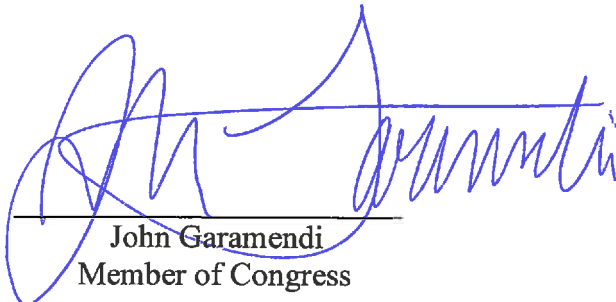
Jason T. Smith
Member of Congress



William R. Keating
Member of Congress



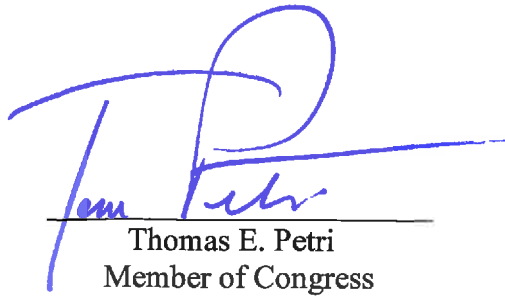
Andy Harris
Member of Congress



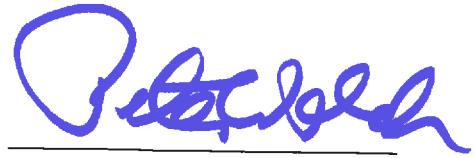
John Garamendi
Member of Congress



Christopher P. Gibson
Member of Congress



Thomas E. Petri
Member of Congress



Peter Welch
Member of Congress



Charles W. Dent
Member of Congress