

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

September 26, 2025

The Honorable Russell Vought
Director
Office of Management and Budget
725 17th Street, NW
Washington, DC 20503

Dear Director Vought,

We write to urge you to release the Fiscal Year (FY) 2025 funding for 22 Department of State Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA) program awards totaling more than \$100 million. Such cuts to Congressionally appropriated, bipartisan programs would undermine America's more than 75-year legacy of international education and exchange programming.

Continued funding is essential for ECA to carry out critical international education and exchange programs that advance U.S. national security, strengthen economic competitiveness, and reinforce democratic values—all vital to achieving the Administration's foreign policy goals. Without predictable and timely funding, flagship initiatives with longstanding bipartisan support, such as the Mandela Washington Fellowship for Young African Leaders, the Young Southeast Asian Leadership Initiative, and the Kennedy-Lugar Youth Exchange and Study (YES) Program, would be at risk of elimination.

The consequences of effectively ending these programs for next year would be severe. More than 55,000 students, scholars, and professionals—including 15,000 Americans traveling abroad—would lose access to programs that, according to the State Department, “strengthen the national security of the United States through improved foreign relations, support U.S. international leadership, and provide a broad range of domestic benefits by...investing in American communities and organizations.”

These programs also provide an exceptional return on investment for American taxpayers. More than 90% of ECA's funding is reinvested in American organizations, educational institutions, and communities. Funding cuts would strip American businesses, schools, and host organizations of billions of dollars in annual economic impact that they generate for the U.S. economy. Eliminating these programs is unfortunately a domestic disinvestment.

Through strong, bipartisan funding in both chambers, Congress has recognized that ECA programs not only advance America's diplomatic and security interests abroad but also deliver substantial benefits here at home. These programs were fully funded in the final FY25 appropriations legislation, and just last month, the House FY26 National Security, Department of State, and Related Programs (NSRP) Appropriations bill funded Educational and Cultural Affairs Programs at more than \$700 million.

If these funds are not released before the end of the fiscal year, long-standing and well-respected public diplomacy programs could be forced to discontinue. We request that OMB take

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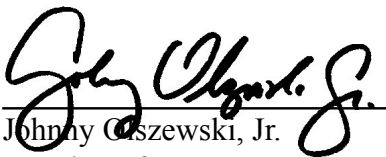
immediate action to release all of the FY25 Congressionally appropriated funds for these critical programs without further delay.

List of Programs:

1. Community College Administrator Program (CCAP)
2. Community College Initiative Program (CCI)
3. Community Engagement Exchange (CEE, Leahy Initiative on Civil Society)
4. Community Solutions Program (CSP)
5. Council of American Overseas Research Centers
6. English Access Scholarship Program
7. English Language Fellow Program
8. Global Undergraduate Exchange Program
9. IDEAS Program
10. Kennedy-Lugar Youth Exchange and Study (YES) and YES Abroad Program
11. Leaders Lead On-Demand
12. Mandela Washington Fellowship for Young African Leaders
13. Mike Mansfield Fellowship Program
14. National Clearinghouse for Disability and Exchange (NCDE)
15. Professional Fellows Program
16. Survey of International Educational Exchange Activity (IEEA) in the United States
17. TechWomen
18. The J. Christopher Stevens Virtual Exchange Initiative
19. U.S. Congress-Korea National Assembly Exchange Program
20. U.S.-South Pacific Scholarship Program (USSP)
21. Young Southeast Asian Leaders Initiative (YSEALI) Academic Fellowship
22. Young Southeast Asian Leaders Initiative (YSEALI) Professional Fellowship Program (PFP)

Thank you for your attention to this urgent matter.

Sincerely,



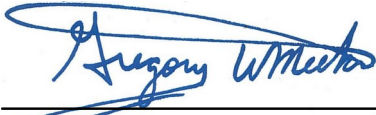
Johnny Ciszewski, Jr.
Member of Congress



Sydney Kamlager-Dove
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Gregory W. Meeks
Ranking Member
House Committee on Foreign
Affairs



Gabe Amo
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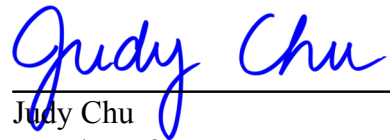
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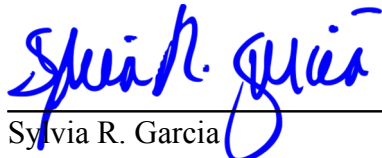
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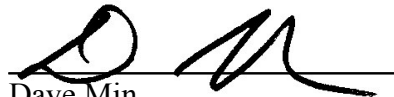
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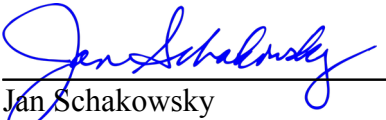
Marc A. Veasey
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