The Honorable Lindsey Graham  
Chairman  
Senate Appropriations Subcommittee  
on State and Foreign Operations  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Patrick Leahy  
Ranking Member  
Senate Appropriations Subcommittee  
on State and Foreign Operations  
Washington, DC 20510

April 26, 2019

Dear Chairman Graham and Ranking Member Leahy,

As the Peace Corps continues to inspire Americans to volunteer and benefit developing communities abroad, we respectfully request that you continue to provide robust funding for the agency in the Fiscal Year 2020 State and Foreign Operations Appropriations bill.

Now in its 58th year, the Peace Corps furthers our national interests by sending over 7,000 Americans of all backgrounds to assist communities in 62 countries in critical areas such as health, education, food security and economic sustainability, impart American ideals of democracy, innovation and diversity, and build people-to-people relationships that can last lifetimes.

The Peace Corps has benefited from several recent reforms. Peace Corps Prep programs at universities and colleges have improved recruitment, resulting in volunteers with more education and career experience, with the average age of a volunteer being 27. Strategic interagency partnerships and participation in whole-of-government initiatives have allowed volunteers to play an increasingly effective and crucial role in combating HIV/AIDS and malaria, improving global food security, and empowering and educating women and girls. Importantly, volunteer safety, security, and health care remain the agency’s top priorities.

The Peace Corps’ return on investment is profound. Host country nationals served by a volunteer are better equipped to meet challenges in the long run, helping to achieve healthier, more stable communities, and prevent conflict.

The Peace Corps is often one of the most transformative experiences in a volunteer’s life, and returned Peace Corps Volunteers continue their call to service by becoming leaders in their communities. Returned volunteers are equipped with strong language, technical, and cultural skills, placing them at an advantage in an increasingly globalized world. Indeed, the Peace Corps is another tool for workforce development for our future professionals and diplomats.

Finally, American ideals of democracy, pluralism and individual rights are spread by the Peace Corps volunteers themselves. They are immersed in their host communities by speaking the same language, eating the same food, enduring the same hardships, and celebrating the same joys.
Thank you for considering our request and for your ongoing support of the Peace Corps.

Sincerely,

[Signatures of United States Senators]
Edward J. Markey
United States Senator

Jeffrey A. Merkley
United States Senator

Bernard Sanders
United States Senator

Tim Kaine
United States Senator

Debbie Stabenow
United States Senator

Martin Heinrich
United States Senator

Maria Cantwell
United States Senator

Amy Klobuchar
United States Senator

Mazie K. Hirono
United States Senator

Christopher S. Murphy
United States Senator

Jeanne Shaheen
United States Senator

Jacky Rosen
United States Senator

Benjamin L. Cardin
United States Senator

Catherine Cortez Masto
United States Senator
Mark R. Warner
United States Senator