April 27, 2018

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

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

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 2019 State and Foreign Operations Appropriations bill.

Now in its 57th year, the Peace Corps further our national interests by sending over 7,000 Americans of all backgrounds to assist communities in 65 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, raising the average age of a volunteer to 28. 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.

Trust in America’s democratic principles, in our free and open society, and in our way of life is one of our strongest foreign policy tools, and the Peace Corps is uniquely placed to use that tool effectively. Volunteers immerse themselves 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,

Johnny Isakson  
United States Senator

Dianne Feinstein  
United States Senator

Susan M. Collins  
United States Senator

Joe Manchin III  
United States Senator

Tim Kaine  
United States Senator

Jack Reed  
United States Senator

Tammy Duckworth  
United States Senator

Elizabeth Warren  
United States Senator

Jeffrey A. Merkley  
United States Senator

Edward J. Markey  
United States Senator

Thomas R. Carper  
United States Senator

Christopher S. Murphy  
United States Senator
Bill Nelson
United States Senator

Jeanne Shaheen
United States Senator

Brian Schatz
United States Senator

Benjamin L. Cardin
United States Senator

Margaret Wood Hassan
United States Senator

Bernard Sanders
United States Senator

Tina Smith
United States Senator

Robert Menendez
United States Senator

Michael F. Bennet
United States Senator

Kamala D. Harris
United States Senator