

April 28, 2021

The Honorable Barbara Lee, Chairwoman
Subcommittee on State, Foreign Operations and
Related Programs
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives

The Honorable Hal Rogers, Ranking Member
Subcommittee on State, Foreign Operations and
Related Programs
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives

Dear Chairwoman Lee and Ranking Member Rogers:

Thank you for your commitment to the Peace Corps. Because of your efforts, the agency is poised for even greater impact at a time when the unique role of the Peace Corps is urgently needed. To ensure the Peace Corps has the resources needed to further its mission, we respectfully ask that you appropriate \$450 million for fiscal year 2022.

Public support for Peace Corps remains strong, and its programs continue to renew and expand, but the agency's potential is severely limited by its essentially flat funding levels in the past six years. The agency's budget allocation has not increased beyond \$410.5 million since fiscal year 2016. Providing \$450 million for fiscal year 2022 would allow the Peace Corps to resume in-country Volunteer activities once safe and prudent to do so, and support the longstanding goal of deploying of 10,000 volunteers worldwide.

More Americans want to serve than the Peace Corps has the funding to absorb. The ratio of annual applications to available Volunteer positions currently stands at over 4:1. Retired General Stanley McChrystal has called this gap between applicants and service opportunities "democratic energy wasted and a generation of patriotism needlessly squandered." Additionally, six years of essentially flat funding has compelled the agency to cut both pre-service and in-service training days to meet budget restrictions, meaning Volunteers get less time for language, technical, and cross-cultural training.

The Peace Corps works to accomplish its legislative mandate within the context of unique security challenges, and the agency has taken steps to improve the health and safety of its Volunteers as it implements provisions within the *Sam Farr Nick Castle Peace Corps Reform Act of 2018* (Public Law 115-256). However, there remain residual health care policy issues within the agency that require increased budgetary support. In particular, we need increased funding and compensation levels for Volunteers temporarily or permanently disabled as a result of their service abroad.

Similar to members of our military and diplomatic corps, Peace Corps Volunteers take an oath to serve our country, and do so often in remote, challenging environments. Increased funding is necessary to ensure that Peace Corps can fulfill its commitment to the health and safety of American citizens who choose to serve.

We thank you for your efforts to provide Peace Corps with the resources it needs to fuel the next generation of American leadership, and we respectfully ask that you make this \$450 million investment in the agency for fiscal year 2022.

Sincerely,