



1825 Connecticut Avenue NW, Suite 800 Washington DC 20009
phone 202.293.7728 web PeaceCorpsConnect.org

The Next Step in Changing the World

June 23, 2022

The Honorable Robert Menendez (D-NJ)
Chairman
Senate Foreign Relations Committee
423 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510-6225

The Honorable James Risch (R-ID)
Ranking Member
Senate Foreign Relations Committee
423 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510-6225

Dear Chairman Menendez and Ranking Member Risch,

We write to express National Peace Corps Association's (NPCA) wholehearted support of the nomination of Carol Spahn to become the twenty-first Director of the Peace Corps. We urge the Senate Foreign Relations Committee to move swiftly to support this nomination and work for full Senate confirmation of Chief Executive Officer Spahn as soon as possible.

NPCA has been honored to work with CEO Spahn and her strong leadership team during the past 18 months. This has been an incredibly challenging time of planning for the Peace Corps' future in the face of a global pandemic. During this time, we have been deeply impressed by CEO Spahn's leadership and collaboration with the Returned Peace Corps Volunteer (RPCV) community. We have full confidence in her commitment to the continued redeployment of Volunteers to the field (which began this past March) in a responsible manner. We are confident that her leadership, coupled with passage of significant Peace Corps reauthorization legislation before Congress, will ensure that the next generation of Volunteers will experience a better, stronger Peace Corps prepared to meet new global challenges.

Because of her leadership during arguably the most difficult period in the Peace Corps' history, we believe President Biden was wise in putting forth this nomination. While our nation — and particularly the world — are not fully free of the COVID-19 pandemic, there is hope that the number of Peace Corps Volunteers returning to service will steadily grow through 2022 and 2023.

As CEO Spahn noted last fall during a hearing before the House Foreign Affairs Committee (HFAC), the work of these redeployed volunteers will include addressing the pandemic. "The pandemic has set back years of development progress and produced unprecedented

challenges. It has also underscored our world's profound interdependence and shared future. Recovery will require international cooperation not only at the government level, but also at the community level. And that is where the Peace Corps as a trusted community partner will return to service in new and time tested ways.”

CEO Spahn has also demonstrated robust leadership on key policy and management issues that are as necessary as they are challenging. Her request last fall to the Sexual Assault Advisory Council to review and update recommendations of the past five years, the public posting of that report, and her outreach to the Peace Corps community to share its concerns and proposals proves her strong commitment to the issue. It is this type of transparency, which she is guiding, that will help support survivors and lower the risks of sexual violence.

Similarly, the Peace Corps is receiving praise for its efforts to advance intercultural competence, diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility within its ranks. During that same HFAC hearing, Committee Chairman Gregory Meeks praised recent agency work in this regard, saying “I understand also that the Peace Corps has instituted this robust program that you've talked about in your opening statement, intercultural competence, diversity, equity, and inclusion, and that you've been leading these efforts. You know, and you probably, from my examination, are ahead of a lot of other agencies”.

The issues outlined above and many more critical to the Peace Corps community were included in NPCA's *Peace Corps Connect to the Future* report (November 2020), which reflected a series of community conversations and town hall meetings with more than 1,000 RPCVs about the future of the Peace Corps. We have been very pleased with the way CEO Spahn has embraced the report and its recommendations, many of which have been implemented over the past year.

Lastly, as a Returned Peace Corps Volunteer (Romania 1994–96), former Country Director, and Chief of Operations for Peace Corps' Southern and Eastern Africa region, we at NPCA believe that Carol Spahn possesses the background, dedication and proven track record to move the Peace Corps forward. We respectfully request that your committee move her nomination swiftly to the full Senate for its consideration and ultimate confirmation.

Sincerely,



Kim Herman
Interim President & CEO
National Peace Corps Association



Jed Meline
Interim Chair – Board of Directors
National Peace Corps Association