

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20510

February 14, 2025

The Honorable Marco Rubio
Secretary of State
2201 C Street NW
Washington, DC 20451

Dear Secretary Rubio,

We write to you to express deep concern regarding the recent actions taken by the Trump Administration with respect to the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) and the freeze on U.S.-provided foreign assistance. The decisions to shutter USAID operations, stop work on all foreign assistance programs, and remove senior USAID leadership risk significant damage to U.S. credibility overseas at a time when rising adversarial powers threaten our global leadership role.

It is not hyperbolic to say that the foreign aid freeze is costing human lives. Twenty-six million lives are at risk because HIV drugs provided by PEPFAR are sitting on shelves; U.S. bird flu monitoring in forty-nine countries has been halted as we are struggling to contain an outbreak in the homeland; and programs that keep products made with Uyghur forced labor out of the global supply chains are shuttering.

This freeze has also severely impacted U.S. support for global democratic governance and adherence to the rule of law. Americans want their government to reflect their values abroad, and both political parties support pro-democracy programming as an essential way to secure U.S. interests internationally. We have taken a special interest in this category of aid, seeing it as a way to support brave colleagues in struggling democracies as they emerge from and resist totalitarian rule. This yields greater commercial opportunities for U.S. businesses, protects our country from terrorism, stems irregular migration, and serves as a crucial counterbalance to countries like China that are all too eager to replace us as the preeminent global power. That is why we implore you to provide congressionally appropriated funding for vital democracy assistance programs.

Throughout history, we have seen that democracies are more peaceful and more prosperous than other governance structures, and do not war with one another. The United States' efforts have been vital in promoting democratic governance, protecting human rights, and respecting the individual freedoms of people around the world. As global democracy seems to be in retreat and autocrats from Vladimir Putin to Xi Jinping are on the march, we risk losing ground on the hard-fought gains we have made.

The stop in democracy programming halts efforts to push back against China's aggressive influence in Asia and undercuts support for U.S. interests in Taiwan, the Pacific Islands, and Tibet. It freezes crucial work to expose China's abuses in Africa, such as its exploitation of strategic minerals, debt-trap lending, and its push to reshape the technological landscape to

disadvantage the United States. The Executive Order also stops work to expose and counter corruption in countries where U.S. businesses want to trade and invest, allowing shadowy deals with China and others that disadvantage U.S. businesses. With China's growing economic and military footprint, especially in strategic regions like the Western Hemisphere and the South Pacific, halting these initiatives signals U.S. weakness, cedes influence to Beijing, and undermines U.S. interests and objectives.

Ending support for democracy programs goes beyond countering China. It also kneecaps democratic activists and watchdogs who are bravely urging their governments to become more democratic, respect human rights, and share the values we espouse. President Trump's Executive Order suspends support for democracy activists in Nicaragua, Venezuela, Cuba, North Korea, Hong Kong, Tibet, and Burma, weakening U.S. efforts to counter some of the most violent, brutal, and repressive regimes.

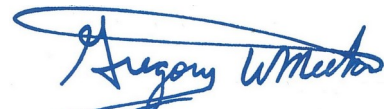
Mr. Secretary, as a member of the United States Senate, you routinely supported foreign aid programs that advance democracy, voted in favor of development assistance to countries in dire need, and advanced global basic education initiatives. As you know, foreign assistance makes up less than 1% of the federal budget, but the benefits are felt from Ecuador to Timor-Leste. In fact, time and again, senior military leadership has underscored the importance of U.S. soft power to safeguard our interests. Now, with U.S. global leadership in question, we implore you to support USAID, the democracy and governance programs it fosters, and the dedicated diplomats and development professionals who dutifully and bravely serve our country.

Thank you for your attention to this critical matter.

Sincerely,



Dina Titus
Member of Congress




Gregory W. Meeks
Ranking Member
House Foreign Affairs
Committee





Ted W. Lieu
Member of Congress





Gerald E. Connolly
Member of Congress



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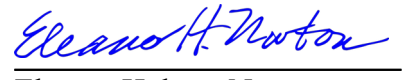

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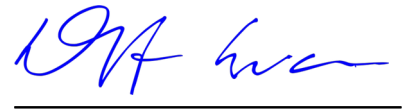

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Eleanor Holmes Norton
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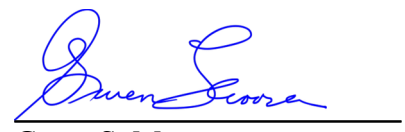

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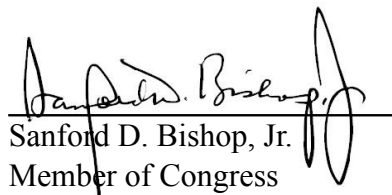

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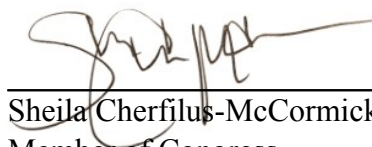
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Dan Goldman
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Sanford D. Bishop, Jr.
Member of Congress



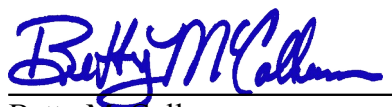
Sheila Cherfilus-McCormick
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LaMonica McIver
Member of Congress



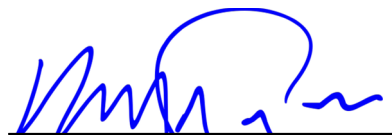
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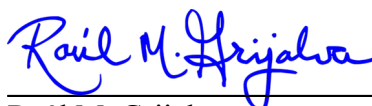
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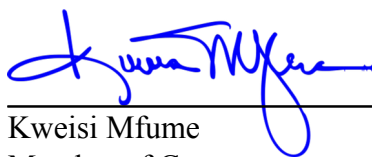
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André Carson
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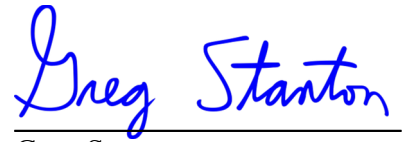
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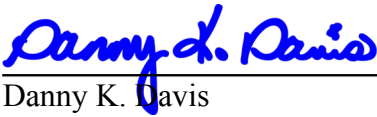
Kweisi Mfume
Member of Congress



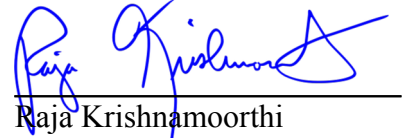
Ilhan Omar
Member of Congress



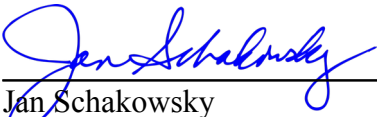
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