

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

March 16, 2012

The Honorable Patrick Leahy  
Chairman  
Subcommittee for State  
and Foreign Operations  
437 Russell Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Lindsey Graham  
Ranking Member  
Subcommittee for State  
and Foreign Operations  
290 Russell Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Mr. Chairman and Senator Graham:

We respectfully request that you provide strong funding for the Peace Corps in the Fiscal Year 2013 State and Foreign Operations Appropriations bill.

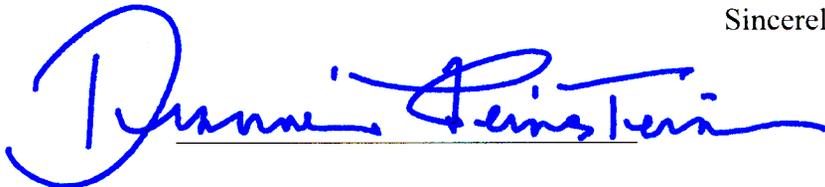
As we move beyond its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary year, the Peace Corps and Congress can be proud of recent significant achievements. For the first time in more than 40 years, the number of volunteers and trainees in the field has surpassed 9,000. At the same time, the number of minorities serving in the Peace Corps has reached 20%, the highest percentage in history. Peace Corps programs are scheduled to return to Tunisia and Nepal, while an annual portfolio review is providing thoughtful analysis on which countries are most strategic and effective for new or expanded volunteer programs.

Achievements are not only being measured in Peace Corps' quantity but also in its quality. In 2011, Congress passed bi-partisan legislation to further support and protect volunteers who are victimized by physical or sexual assault. Expanded partnerships with NGOs and allowing highly skilled Americans who have not served to apply for the short-term Peace Corps Response program demonstrate innovative steps the agency is taking to improve and advance collaborative development initiatives. Just one example of progress is the community-based outreach and coordination being undertaken by volunteers in Senegal who are working with government and NGO partners to distribute bed nets in a nationwide effort to eliminate the human suffering caused by malaria.

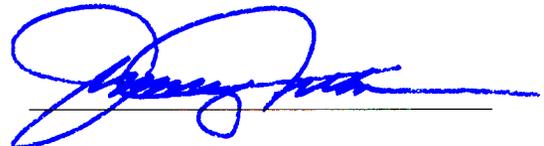
It is important to note that Peace Corps Volunteers serving their country are also American citizens with jobs. Upon the completion of service, returned Peace Corps Volunteers come home with a variety of marketable skills that are attractive to employers and beneficial to local communities. With 13,500 applicants for only 4,500 positions, there continues to be a robust supply of individuals wishing to serve their country through the Peace Corps. With up to 20 countries having their requests for volunteers go unfulfilled, there continues to be a built-up demand for the type of positive bi-lateral engagement that Peace Corps service personifies.

While we realize the fiscal challenges that confront us, it is important to build upon the recent achievements with Peace Corps programming and imperative that we not reverse course. We thank you for your ongoing support for a strong and vibrant Peace Corps.

Sincerely,



Dianne Feinstein



Lindsey Graham

Janice K. Spaka

MP

Richard Blumenthal

Paul Bevilacqua

Bob Brier

Tom Carper

Sara Gabel

Kay R. Hagan

Herb Kohl

Frank R. Lautenberg

Robert Menendez

Barbara Mikulski

Ben Rayburn

Kott P. Brown

Susan Collins

Olympic Snowy

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Max G. Baucus

Blaine Luetken

Jeffrey A. Mudgett

Jay Byrnes

Charles Schumer

Tom Udare

John Udare

Mark Udall

Ron Udalen