

# Congressional Update – September 2007

## **ACTION REQUESTED:**

Please contact your members of Congress today to ask them to support funding of \$509.4 million for State Department-administered educational and cultural exchanges, including \$222.645 million for Fulbright programs, contained in the Senate version of the Fiscal Year (FY) 2008 State-Foreign Operations Appropriations legislation. The Senate funding level for exchanges is \$8 million above the \$501.4 million approved by the House of Representatives, and \$23 million above the \$486.4 million requested by the President. **If you are a constituent of one of the Senate conferees or likely House conferees (see list under Key Contacts below), your message is especially important as the funding bill will now be the subject of a conference committee between the House and the Senate to work out the differences between the two versions of the bill.**

## **BACKGROUND INFORMATION:**

On Sept. 6, the U.S. Senate approved legislation to fund the State Department's educational and cultural exchange programs at \$509.4 million in FY 2008. The Senate funding level is \$64.2 million over current-year funding of \$445.2 million, or a 14.4 percent increase. The Senate bill would provide \$222.645 million for Fulbright exchanges, as compared to \$218.757 million in the House bill. The Senate funding level would further strengthen the Fulbright and other flagship exchange programs and build strong exchange initiatives. The bill has drawn a veto threat from President Bush over provisions regarding international family planning.

## **KEY CONTACTS:**

The following senators have been named to the conference committee that will resolve differences between the Senate and House versions of the FY 2008 State-Foreign Operations Appropriations legislation. If your senator is on this list, it is very important for you to contact him or her to support the Senate level of \$509.4 million for exchanges. (See sample letter on reverse side.) If your Senator is not on this list, it is still important for you to contact him/her to express your support.

Sen. Patrick Leahy (D-VT)  
Sen. Daniel Inouye (D-HI)  
Sen. Tom Harkin (D-IA)  
Sen. Barbara Mikulski (D-MD)  
Sen. Richard Durbin (D-IL)  
Sen. Tim Johnson (D-SD)  
Sen. Mary Landrieu (D-LA)  
Sen. Jack Reed (D-RI)  
Sen. Robert Byrd (D-WV)

Sen. Judd Gregg (R-NH)  
Sen. Mitch McConnell (R-KY)  
Sen. Arlen Specter (R-PA)  
Sen. Robert Bennett (R-UT)  
Sen. Christopher Bond (R-MO)  
Sen. Sam Brownback (R-KS)  
Sen. Lamar Alexander (R-TN)  
Sen. Thad Cochran (R-MS)

Representatives on the following list will likely be on the conference committee that resolves differences between the Senate and House versions of the FY 2008 State-Foreign Operations Appropriations legislation. If your representative is listed, it is critical to send the message that you support the Senate level of \$509.4 million for exchanges. (See sample letter on reverse side.) If your representative is not listed, it is still important for you to contact him/her to express your support.

Rep. Nita M. Lowey (D NY-18)  
Rep. Jesse L. Jackson Jr. (D IL-2)  
Rep. Adam Schiff (D CA-29)  
Rep. Steve Israel (D NY-2)  
Rep. Ben Chandler (D KY-6)  
Rep. Steve Rothman (D NJ-9)  
Rep. Barbara Lee (D CA-9)  
Rep. Betty McCollum (D MN-4)

Rep. Frank R. Wolf (R VA-10)  
Rep. Joe Knollenberg (R MI-9)  
Rep. Mark Steven Kirk (R IL-10)  
Rep. Ander Crenshaw (R FL-4)  
Rep. Dave Weldon (R FL-15)

**If you have already sent letters to your Senators and Representative on this issue, please follow up. Use our web site at [www.fulbright.org/advocacy](http://www.fulbright.org/advocacy) or fax, e-mail, or phone your message to Congress.**

*Letters to senators should be addressed to:*  
The Honorable (Name of senator)  
United States Senate  
Washington, D.C. 20510

*Letters to representatives should be addressed to:*  
The Honorable (Name of representative)  
United States House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20515

## SAMPLE LETTERS

**SENATE LETTER** (Find online at <http://capwiz.com/fulbright/issues/alert/?alertid=10299006>.)

Dear \_\_\_\_\_:

As your constituent and an active proponent of the Fulbright Program and other international exchanges, I seek your support for the Senate's \$509.4 million funding level for Department of State exchange programs, including \$222.645 million for the Fulbright Program, in the final conference agreement on the State, Foreign Operations and Related Agencies Appropriations legislation for Fiscal Year (FY) 2008. The House of Representatives approved \$501.4 million for exchanges in FY 2008, with \$218.757 million for Fulbright programs.

The investment we make in the Fulbright Program, our nation's flagship exchange program, and other exchanges, brings documented returns and advances our national interests. According to State Department evaluations:

\* Visiting Fulbright students attest to the exchange's impact: 99 percent say the program increased their knowledge and understanding of the United States and its culture; 96 percent shared their Fulbright experiences in their home country; and 89 percent reported that their Fulbright experiences allowed them to assume leadership roles after their programs.

\* U.S. Fulbright students strongly agree (97 percent) that the program strengthens bilateral relationships and deepened their understanding of their host country (100 percent). U.S. Fulbright students also say the program significantly enhanced their leadership skills.

\* Fulbright Teacher Exchange grantees find their Fulbright experience to "be life changing" and to "give a deeper understanding of global interaction." According to the most recent participant evaluations, 97 percent of participants rated their exchange highly. Nearly half of the participants continue to do projects with their host schools after returning home.

As the conference committee resolves differences in the House and Senate versions of the State, Foreign Operations and Related Agencies Appropriations bills for FY 2008, please ask them to support the Senate funding level of \$509.4 million for exchanges to allow for robust funding for targeted, meaningful growth in every region of the world for the Fulbright Program and other core exchange programs, to provide additional resources for Islamic Exchange, to sustain funding for Eurasia and Eastern Europe, and to encourage the development of new and innovative programs worldwide.

Thank you for your support of these important programs.

**HOUSE LETTER** (Find online at <http://capwiz.com/fulbright/issues/alert/?alertid=10299006>.)

Dear \_\_\_\_\_:

As your constituent and an active proponent of the Fulbright Program and other international exchanges, I seek your support for the \$509.4 million funding level for Department of State exchange programs in the final conference agreement on the State, Foreign Operations and Related Agencies Appropriations legislation for Fiscal Year (FY) 2008. I understand that the House of Representatives approved funding for exchanges at \$501.4 million in FY 2008, with \$218.757 million for Fulbright programs. I urge you to support the Senate version of the FY 2008 bill, which includes \$222.645 million for the Fulbright programs.

The investment we make in the Fulbright Program, our nation's flagship exchange program, and other exchanges, brings documented returns and advances our national interests. According to State Department evaluations:

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