

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

May 1, 2024

The Honorable Mario Diaz-Balart
Chairman
Subcommittee on State, Foreign Operations, and
Related Programs
HT-2 The Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Barbara Lee
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on State, Foreign Operations, and
Related Programs
1036 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Diaz-Balart and Ranking Member Lee:

We write to express our support for the Department of State's Increase and Diversify Education Abroad for U.S. Students (IDEAS) program in the Fiscal Year 2025 State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs Appropriations bill. The IDEAS program is a Department of State initiative that promotes study abroad educational opportunities. In an increasingly interconnected world, it is critical that students of all backgrounds can access diverse, international educational experiences to expand their worldviews and gain the skills needed for the U.S. to maintain its global leadership.

Currently, only ten percent of U.S. college students participate in study abroad before graduation and students of color, first-generation college students, and community college students are underrepresented among participants. During the COVID-19 pandemic, study abroad participation plummeted 91 percent and has yet to fully rebound. Additionally, institutions of higher education seldom prioritize study abroad programs in developing countries that would offer students valuable new experiences. Expanding study abroad opportunities would help prepare the next generation of Americans to compete in the global economy.

The Department of State's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs provides competitive grants to American universities and colleges to establish, expand, and diversify their study abroad programming through the IDEAS grant program. To build on this program's success, we respectfully request the inclusion of the following report language:

Of the funds provided under this Act to the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, not less than \$5 million shall be set aside for grants under the Increase and Diversify Education Abroad for U.S. Students (IDEAS) grant program. The Committee directs the Secretary to rename the IDEAS program the "Senator Paul Simon Study Abroad Program." The Committee encourages the Secretary to establish the following priorities for the program: (1) ensure that significantly more students have access to quality study abroad opportunities; (2) ensure that the diversity of students studying abroad reflects the diversity of students and institutions of higher education in the United States; (3) expand study abroad opportunities to nontraditional destinations, especially in developing countries; (4) encourage greater commitment by institutions of higher education to expand study abroad opportunities; and (5) allow funds to cover student costs.

Thank you for your consideration of our request and for your continued support of study abroad opportunities.

Sincerely,



Bradley Scott Schneider
Member of Congress



Lucy McBath
Member of Congress



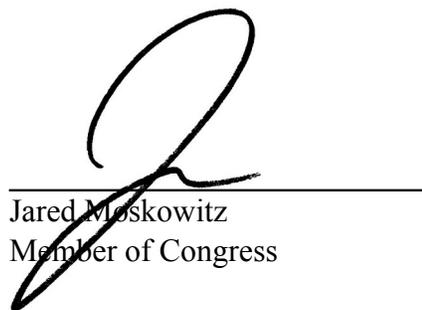
Nikema Williams
Member of Congress



Shontel M. Brown
Member of Congress



Adam B. Schiff
Member of Congress



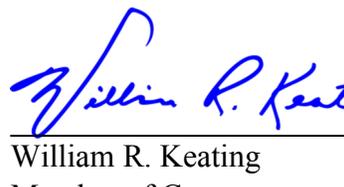
Jared Moskowitz
Member of Congress



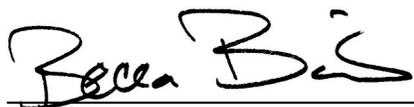
Emanuel Cleaver, II
Member of Congress



Andy Kim
Member of Congress



William R. Keating
Member of Congress



Becca Balint
Member of Congress



Eleanor Holmes Norton
Member of Congress



Seth Magaziner
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Danny K. Davis
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