Date

Congressional Representative
BUILDING & OFFICE SUITE
Washington, D.C. ZIP

Dear XXX:

As a constituent to ask you to support the current request for the International Affairs Budget. This funding will ensure the continued viability of the State Department-sponsored international exchange programs. The International Affairs Budget request is less than 1% of the entire federal budget and of this only .018% is dedicated to exchange programs. As part of a network of local citizen diplomats who work with the Council for International Visitors to Iowa Cities (CIVIC), I have experienced the power and value of international exchange programs.

Exchange programs are fiscally responsible, smart foreign policy. By accompanying visitors to their professional meetings, sharing Iowa’s rich culture on local excursions, and by hosting the visitors in our homes for dinner, local citizen diplomats help turn every federal dollar into $5.85. CIVIC members witness first-hand the ability of exchange programs to break down stereotypes about America and Americans. For example, upon departing from a professional exchange program this past summer, a participant from Senegal commented that he promised to “be an ambassador for the United States” when he returned home.

Exchange programs benefit Iowans. From the $52,000 in federal funding received in fiscal year 2019, visitors generated an estimated local economic impact of $233,000. People-to-people exchanges also help Iowa businesses build global networks locally, making them more competitive today and in the future. Similarly, young professional Iowans are expected to compete in a globalized world. Bringing the world to Iowa through exchanges offers area students the opportunity to strengthen their cultural competency, practice their foreign language skills with native speakers, and forge global connections right here in Iowa. This is especially important for students who may not enjoy the opportunity to study or travel abroad.

Please use your influence and speak with your congressional colleagues about the importance of strengthening our foreign policy through the power of exchange. By doing so, you will effectively represent our—and your—commitment to international peace and American prosperity.

Sincerely,

XXX