

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

February 29, 2008

The Honorable John M. Spratt, Jr.  
Chairman  
House Committee on the Budget  
207 Cannon House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Paul Ryan  
Ranking Member  
House Committee on the Budget  
B71 Cannon House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Spratt and Ranking Member Ryan:

As you complete work on the Budget Resolution for fiscal year 2009, we know you face many tough choices. As you weigh these choices, we urge your support for our government's ability to build global stability through diplomacy and development.

Specifically, we urge you to provide no less than the President's \$39.5 billion FY09 International Affairs Budget request. The vast array of programs in the International Affairs toolkit ranges from combating proliferation of nuclear weapons to boosting sales of our nation's goods and services around the world through export promotion and commercial diplomacy, to investing in poverty reduction programs and providing emergency assistance.

America's national security is built on three interconnected pillars – defense, diplomacy, and development. Funding allocated to the International Affairs Budget provides almost entirely for the second and third pillars, yet represents only 1.3% of the entire federal budget. Now more than ever, we must emphasize the critical role of development and diplomacy in contributing to global stability. These programs express the compassion of the American people for those in need around the world through spurring economic development, strengthening democracies and civil societies, and responding to global challenges such as HIV/AIDS and other infectious diseases, the need for safe drinking water, hunger, illiteracy, and environmental degradation. Our crucial investments in poverty-fighting foreign assistance reduce the strain on our national defense and help to make the world a safer, healthier place to live.

Support for the U.S. International Affairs Budget is shared across the political spectrum, from national security and foreign policy experts to the vast majority of the American public. A recent nationwide survey by the Program for International Policy Attitudes revealed that 69% of Americans want to see a greater emphasis on "soft power" in America's foreign policy.

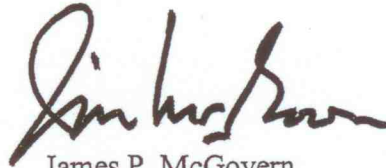
Our nation can no longer afford to shortchange these vital programs. We must ensure that the U.S. is equipped to face its global challenges – and its opportunities – in the 21st century. Investing in the International Affairs Budget accomplishes this important goal and affirms the reality that what happens abroad ultimately affects our prosperity, our values, and our safety here at home. We urge you to provide no less than \$39.5 billion

for the International Affairs Budget, so that we can continue to expand our leadership as a nation in the quest for freedom, prosperity and peace throughout the world.

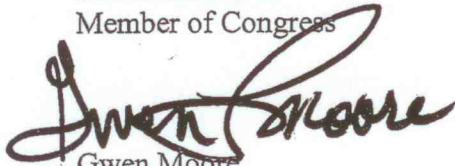
Sincerely,



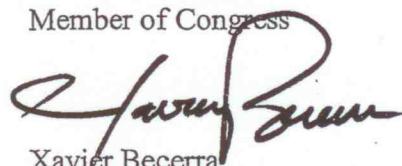
Earl Blumenauer  
Member of Congress



James P. McGovern  
Member of Congress



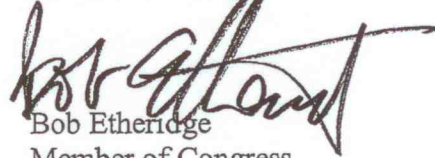
Gwen Moore  
Member of Congress



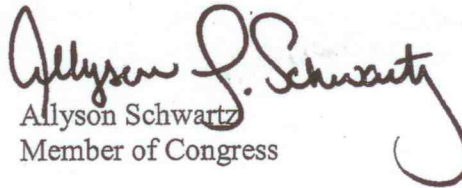
Xavier Becerra  
Member of Congress



Timothy H. Bishop  
Member of Congress



Bob Etheridge  
Member of Congress



Allyson J. Schwartz  
Member of Congress