

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

April 22, 2009

The Honorable Kent Conrad
Chairman
Committee on the Budget
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Judd Gregg
Ranking Member
Committee on the Budget
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Conrad and Ranking Member Gregg:

We urge you to maintain the Senate position on International Affairs funding during conference negotiations with the House on the Fiscal Year 2010 budget resolution. Maintaining the President's requested level of funding, \$53.8 billion, is critical to protecting our national security and furthering our economic interests abroad.

Our amendment to restore funding to the level requested by the President was adopted by unanimous consent, underlying strong bipartisan Senate support for the full International Affairs Budget.


As Secretary of Defense, Robert Gates, has said: "What is clear to me is that there is a need for a dramatic increase in spending on the civilian instruments of national security – diplomacy, strategic communications, foreign assistance, civic action, and economic reconstruction and development."

Returning diplomacy and development to their rightful place cannot be achieved through words alone: It takes money to drive civilian foreign policy. If it keeps us safer, as we believe it will, then that is money well spent.

We must recognize just what a small share of our overall spending the President's international affairs budget comprises: 1.4% of the total FY 2010 Budget and only 6.8% of the "national security budget," which includes defense and homeland security. This sliver of our budget funds all State Department operations, foreign aid and foreign policy programs, our diplomatic programs, global health initiatives on HIV/AIDS, Malaria and Tuberculosis programs, and humanitarian assistance to help stabilize fragile states, reduce global poverty and assist refugees.

The Senate has spoken clearly on these priorities, and we urge you to maintain the Senate-passed position. Thank you for considering our request.

Sincerely,



John Kerry
United States Senator



Richard Lugar
United States Senator



Patrick Leahy
United States Senator



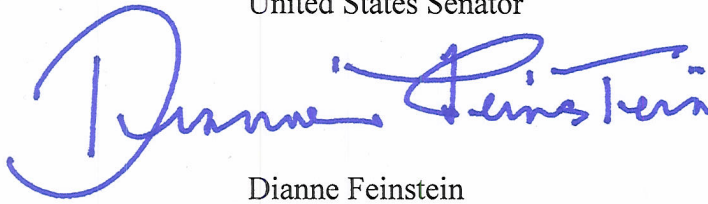
Bob Corker
United States Senator



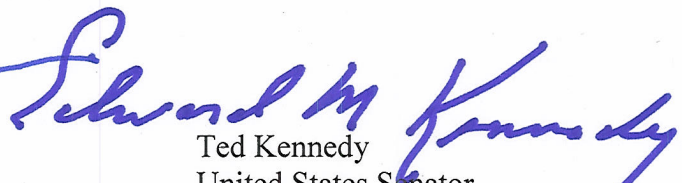
Richard Durbin
United States Senator



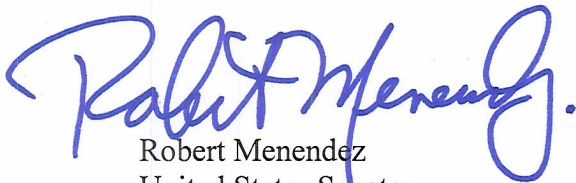
George Voinovich
United States Senator



Dianne Feinstein
United States Senator



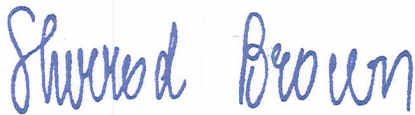
Ted Kennedy
United States Senator



Robert Menendez
United States Senator



Joseph Lieberman
United States Senator



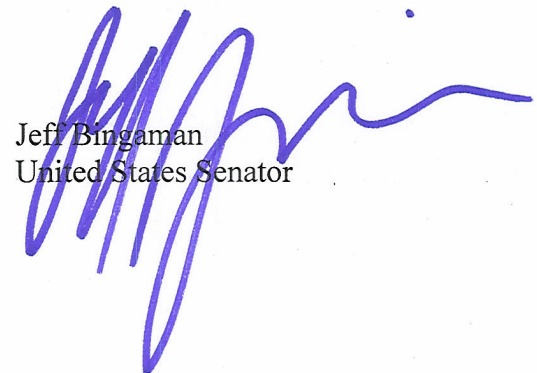
Sherrod Brown
United States Senator



Bernard Sanders
United States Senator



Bob Casey
United States Senator



Jeff Bingaman
United States Senator



Ted Kaufmann
United States Senator