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Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Committee on Appropriations
Washington, DC 20515-6015

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October 30, 2020

The Honorable Michael R. Pompeo
Secretary of State
2201 C Street, NW
Washington, DC 20520

Dear Mr. Secretary:

We write to express our deep concern regarding the Department of State's and U.S. Agency for International Development's (USAID) decision to pause all training programs related to diversity and inclusion. Given the Department's longstanding challenges to expand opportunities for people of color in its workforce, the Department should be expanding all programs with a demonstrated contribution to strengthening diversity, including training. We request that you rescind this decision immediately and allow all diversity training in the Department and USAID to continue.

Earlier this year, the Government Accountability Office (GAO) found that the Department has continually failed to reflect all of America in its hiring and promotions. Among the GAO's findings:

The proportion of racial and ethnic minority employees in the Department's workforce increased only modestly over the sixteen-year period from 2002 to 2018, while the proportion of minority employees in the Civil Service decreased. Between 2002 and 2018, the percentage of African Americans working at the Department *declined* from 17% to 15%.

The higher ranks of the Department's workforce are the least diverse, with the proportion of racial or ethnic minorities and women declining at each higher rung on the promotion ladder above GS-11 and Foreign Service Class 5.

This lack of diversity in the Department's workforce has a pernicious impact on the United States' ability to advance our interests and values. When whole classes of Americans don't see themselves in the image the United States presents abroad, they feel alienated from their own government. Similarly, the rest of the world is presented with a distorted vision of who America is and what we stand for. Conversely, when America puts our diversity front and

center in our diplomacy, it inspires others and provides additional avenues to engage with the United States.

Just last month, on September 22, 2020, Director General of the Foreign Service Carol Z. Perez testified before the House Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations on this very issue. At that hearing, Ambassador Perez testified to how diversity and inclusion training plays a helpful role in helping the Department address its workforce diversity challenges. She further cited that the Department had made the Foreign Service Institute's "Mitigating Unconscious Bias" training a prerequisite for leadership courses.

Year after year, the Committee on Appropriations has provided both resources and direction to the Department and USAID to expand workforce diversity and to report on the status of such efforts. The suspension of diversity and inclusion training demonstrates a lack of commitment from Department leadership to fully pursue this Congressionally mandated mission. We urge you to rescind your decision to suspend diversity and inclusion training and increase your efforts to improve the diversity of the Department of State workforce.

Sincerely,



Chairwoman Nita M. Lowey



Vice Chairwoman Barbara Lee



Grace Meng



David E. Price



Lois Frankel



Norma J. Torres

cc: Acting USAID Administrator Barsa
cc: Undersecretary Bulatao