

November 9th, 2021

The Honorable Patrick Leahy
Chairman
Senate Committee on Appropriations
The Capitol, Room S-128
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Lindsey Graham
Ranking Member
Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on State and
Foreign Operations
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Richard Shelby
Vice Chairman
Senate Committee on Appropriations
The Capitol, Room S-146A
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Chris Van Hollen
Chairman
Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on
Financial Services & General Government
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Chris Coons
Chairman
Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on State and
Foreign Operations
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Cindy Hyde-Smith
Ranking Member
Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on
Financial Services & General Government
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Leahy, Vice Chairman Shelby, Chairman Coons, Ranking Member Graham,
Chairman Van Hollen, and Ranking Member Hyde-Smith:

As you finalize the Fiscal Year 2022 Appropriations bills, we respectfully request that you include \$10 million for the State Department internship program and \$4.5 million for the White House internship program, which was incorporated in the House adopted bill. These funds would help open the doors to working in public service for all, regardless of a prospective intern's socioeconomic status. Too prospective public servants are limited by financial circumstances these funds can help fix.

This funding falls directly in line with recommendations made by Congress's 2017 Commission on Military, National, and Public Service, which released a 2020 report [recommending](#) all federal government interns be paid to "expand the socioeconomic diversity of interested applicants and interns and improve competitiveness with private-sector internships."¹

We know that paid internships work. Your recent decision to fund congressional internships has allowed thousands of young people from across the country to intern on Capitol Hill and in district offices, encouraging them to consider a future in government service. You've opened the door to one pathway to civil service. Let's open another.

Our funding request is supported by approximately 300 alumni from the White House internship program spanning the last five administrations.² Similarly, support for the State Department internship program is also led and supported on a bipartisan basis by Senator Tim Scott (SC), Senator Cory Booker (NJ) and Rep. Joaquin Castro (TX), who introduced, S.599 - Department of State Student Internship Program Act to support funding for State Department interns.

¹ The recommendations were echoed in June 2021, vis-a-vis an Executive Order calling on federal agencies to reduce reliance on unpaid internships, and further support more racial, geographic and socioeconomic diversity in public service.

² For your reference, we have included a copy of their original letter from the White House interns.

With fewer than 6% of the current federal workforce under the age of 30, we must find solutions that develop future generations of public leaders. Paid internships are a pathway to more diverse and representative civil servants and a federal government more capable of weathering the challenges ahead. An absence of family wealth should not be a barrier to public service.

Now is time for the Senate to expand paid federal internships beyond Congress, starting with the White House and State Department. Thank you for your leadership in strengthening our democracy.

Respectfully,

Pay Our Interns
Black Professionals in International Affairs
Senior Executives Association
Democracy Fund Voice
Demand Progress
College to Congress
Desis For Progress
The Daniel Initiative
Lorelei Kelly
Faith McCarroll
Amber Przybyla
Ailsa Hermann-Wu
Aidan Sova
Hannah Campbell
Danielle Donovan
Thalia Blankson
Bunmi Akinnusotu
Adia Smalls
Rikeshia Davidson
Catherine Morris
Mike Holtz
Chandra Osann
Debora Aponte-Martinez
Anthony Read
Laurel Noack
Caroline Shanley
Marci Harris
Jake Rotter
Ryan Young
Brittney Jimenez