Write an email “letter”

Write an email to your members of the House and Senate to urge full funding of the Fulbright Program for the fiscal year 2019. Refer to the sample message and advocacy resources (below) for a framework for your letter, and focus on conveying the lasting impact of your Fulbright experience.

Since congressional appropriators always think in terms of the benefits associated with the expenditure of US taxpayer dollars, it is important to focus on the political and economic impacts of educational exchange for the United States in general and the Fulbright Program in particular: how an international exchange program serves American national interests.

Sample letter script in support of Fulbright Program funding

Dear ______________________,

As a constituent and a(n) alumna/alumnus/friend of the Fulbright Program, I am contacting you to ask you to support the full restoration of funding for the Fulbright Program for the fiscal year 2019 and to fund it at the highest level possible in the future. The proposed 2019 budget entails dramatic cuts to the Department of State’s exchange programs, which would result in a 71% cut to the Fulbright Program and jeopardize the flagship academic exchange program of the United States.

I believe in the mission of the Fulbright Program, which makes vital contributions to:

- **National security**: The Fulbright Program is the United States’ oldest, largest, and most highly esteemed exchange program that promotes enduring relationships with friends, allies, and trade partners of the United States. Over 380,000 alumni of the Fulbright Program have created innumerable networks of long-lasting and valuable international relationships, anchoring US national security in a global community of trust, understanding, and shared values. Fulbright alumni include 37 current and former heads of state or government who are familiar with and support the United States.

- **International alliances**: The Fulbright Program promotes cooperation with 160 countries, 49 of which have long-standing commissions that match or exceed US funding with their own contributions, totaling over $100 million annually. Fulbright’s reputation is a key feature of many bilateral relations, promoting education, business development, and leadership.

- **US Higher Education**: Over 1,200 American colleges and universities participate in the Fulbright Program, which gives US students and faculty critical opportunities to increase their international expertise. It also internationalizes American institutions by attracting the best and the brightest minds from abroad. Visiting Fulbright grantees spend their grants locally, putting millions of dollars directly into American institutions and communities.

(Tip: If you want a state-by-state overview on the benefits of federally funded exchange programs as well as the economic impact of international education in your home state, please consult the Congressional State One-Pagers and download your state’s PDF. The economic impact of international education on the US economy is over $36 billion.)

**Include a personal note**: Mention how and when you participated in the Austrian-American Fulbright Program as well as how it has impacted upon your career and community using a specific example or outcome. Keep your letter brief (no more than one page!) and constructive. Avoid partisan polemics. The restoration of funding for the Fulbright Program needs to be a bipartisan effort.
Close out with an ask: Cutting funding for the Fulbright Program would do great harm to many of America’s political, economic, and educational interests. Please oppose cuts to the Fulbright Program and ensure robust funding for it at the level of $250 million in the future.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
(Your name and signature)

-----------------------

Make a phone call
When urgent and rapid action is needed to prevent Fulbright Program cuts, Fulbright alumni are strongly encouraged to call their members of Congress. Use and adapt the sample script below when making phone calls. After you hang up the phone with your congressional representative’s office, please send us an email at staff@fulbright.at to let us know about your action and the response you received.

Sample telephone script in support of Fulbright Program funding
Hello, my name is ________________, and I am a constituent from _________________, where the ZIP code is __________, and an active proponent of the Fulbright Program. I am calling today to urge Senator/Representative __________ to restore funding for the Fulbright Program.

Fulbright and other State Department international exchange programs are smart and cost-effective investments in American global economic competitiveness and national security.

State Department exchange programs currently constitute 0.0001% (one ten-thousandth) of the federal budget. Yet the economic and national security benefits these programs return to the United States far outweigh this relatively modest expenditure.

I look forward to hearing Senator/Representative __________’s position on funding State Department exchanges. If I can provide any more information about the Fulbright Program or other exchange programs, please don’t hesitate to contact me at _____________.*

Key lawmakers
The House and Senate Appropriations Subcommittees on State, Foreign Operations and Related Programs determine the funding level for the Fulbright Program. The members of these subcommittees are the most important decision makers in Congress in terms of determining Fulbright Program funding.

Their staff members are decision influencers.

House Subcommittee on State, Foreign Operations Majority

Hal Rogers (KY-5), Chairman
Kay Granger (TX-12)
Mario Diaz-Balart (FL-25)
Charlie Dent (PA-15)
Tom Rooney (FL-17)
Jeff Fortenberry (NE-1)
Chris Stewart (UT-2)

Minority
Nita Lowey (NY-18), Ranking Member
Barbara Lee (CA-13)
C.A. Dutch Ruppersberger (MD-2)
Grace Meng (NY-6)
David Price (NC-4)

Senate Subcommittee on State, Foreign Operations Majority

Lindsey Graham (SC), Chairman
Mitch McConnell (KY)
Roy Blunt (MO)
John Boozman (AR)
Jerry Moran (KS)
James Lankford (OK)
Steve Daines (MT)
Marco Rubio (FL)

Minority
Patrick Leahy (VT), Ranking Member
Richard Durbin (IL)
Jeannie Shaheen (NH)
Christopher Coons (DE)
Jeff Merkley (OR)
Christ Murphy (CT)
Chris van Hollen (MD)

What else can you do?

- Send us copies of the letters/emails you have sent to members of Congress along with their responses. Share any photos taken with members of Congress as well. Send to staff@fulbright.at.

- Share your personal story of your Fulbright experience. Talk about the influence that Fulbright alumni have in your local community in both the public and private sectors. Talk about the economic impact of visiting Fulbright Scholars in your state. Print out your state’s economic impact sheet and leave it behind in your congressional representative’s office.

- Share and spread this call to action nationwide through your personal network. If Congress hears from thousands of constituents, both Fulbrighters (140,000 US alumni) and friends, we can save Fulbright—now and for the future.