

May 20, 2015

U.S. Senate Committee on Foreign Relations  
423 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510-6225

Dear Chairman Corker:

As retired U.S. Ambassadors, who had the honor of testifying before Congress, we have a deep appreciation for the work the Senate Foreign Relations Committee does, and in particular, its bipartisan approach to nominations, oversight and its many other responsibilities. As individuals who led embassy teams, we also greatly appreciate your current efforts to formulate and pass a State Department re-authorization for the first time in well over a decade. It is the fiscally responsible thing to do, and will help immensely as our ambassadors work with their respective country teams to plan annual programming.

We can also tell you, based on personal experience working closely with many rank-and-file Foreign Service members, that perhaps the greatest service you could do them as you finalize your re-authorization would be to authorize full overseas comparability pay (OCP), which would maintain their base pay at the Washington DC locality pay level. It would provide Foreign Service members - our diplomats who often put their lives on the line and drag their families around the world - the financial certainty that they need in their career, 60% of which is spent overseas. It would ensure them base pay equity with their colleagues serving a domestic assignment, as well as with those from other agencies, such as the intelligence community, which has paid full OCP for over a decade.

There is a real difference between OCP and allowances, which are provided to employees for service at posts where conditions differ considerably from those in the United States. They compensate for higher prices, deficient and/or unavailable local goods and services, difficult, unhealthful and at times dangerous conditions. OCP is Washington base pay at locality pay rates - it serves as the platform for an FSO's salary over the course of his or her career.

As you do right by the Agencies - State and USAID - we ask that you do right by those who serve as well.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

The Honorable George P. Shultz  
Amb. Eric J. Boswell (Ret.)  
Amb. Stephen Bosworth (Ret.)  
Amb. Thomas D. Boyatt (Ret.)  
Amb. A. Peter Burleigh (Ret.)  
Amb. Herman J. Cohen (Ret.)  
Amb. Shaun Donnelly (Ret.)  
Amb. Edward Djerejian (Ret.)  
Amb. Theodore L. Eliot Jr. (Ret.)  
Amb. Robert Finn (Ret.)  
Amb. William Harrop (Ret.)  
Amb. Robert G. Houdek (Ret.)  
Amb. James F. Jeffrey (Ret.)

Amb. A. Elizabeth Jones (Ret.)  
Amb. Daniel C. Kurtzer (Ret.)  
Amb. Ronald E. Neumann (Ret.)  
Amb. W. Robert Pearson (Ret.)  
Amb. Robert H. Pelletreau (Ret.)  
Amb. Edward J. Perkins (Ret.)  
Amb. Thomas Pickering (Ret.)  
Amb. Charles A. Ray (Ret.)  
Amb. Francis J. Ricciardone (Ret.)  
Amb. Patrick N. Theros (Ret.)  
Amb. Alexander F. Watson (Ret.)  
Amb. E. Allan Wendt (Ret.)