

June 12, 2014

CBYX - A Vital Investment in the German-American Partnership

Dear Colleagues,

Inaugurated in 1983 by a joint resolution of U.S. Congress and the German Bundestag, the Congress-Bundestag Youth Exchange program (CBYX) was created to strengthen ties between Germany and the United States through citizen diplomacy. The program is jointly funded by the U.S. Congress and the German Bundestag. Over the past 30 years, the Congress-Bundestag Youth Exchange has supported over 22,000 high school students and young professionals from both countries, helping prepare them for success in an increasingly global world. This is an incredible testament to each country's commitment to, and investment in, the German-American partnership.

As one of the most enduring reciprocal public diplomacy programs, CBYX remains crucial to building understanding and relationships amongst young people in our two countries. Our transatlantic alliance – on issues of trade and investment, international security, the environment and energy, and many others – contributes not only significant benefits to our own citizens, but also to the world community. We need to educate the next generation how to face the new challenges, as well as to take advantage of the great opportunities, that exist between our two countries.

As former Ambassadors in Germany and the United States, we met regularly with participants in CBYX and personally witnessed the enormous impact this program has on the worldview of the participants and on their personal and professional development. We understood that the legacy of our time as a diplomat in each other's respective country was measured by how well we "set the table" for tomorrow, by how deeply we helped youth understand the ongoing relevance of the transatlantic bridge. They are tomorrow's leaders and the investment in their future must be our highest priority. In a recent meeting with American CBYX participants in Berlin recognizing the program's 30th anniversary, U.S. Ambassador to Germany John Emerson, declared "We are big believers in this program." So are all of us!

We strongly urge members of the U.S. Congress and German Bundestag to remain firm in their commitment to CBYX. While our countries maintain a strong alliance, the relations have been strained recently as we deal with tough economic and international challenges at home and abroad. Rather than using this as an excuse to lessen our investment in exchanges, this should be a cause to invest further. Annually serving 700 young Germans and Americans (350 in each direction), CBYX serves as one of the most important public diplomacy assets at our country's disposal and should be maintained at its current funding and participant levels. The CBYX mission to maintain and improve the transatlantic relationship continues to be relevant today, now more than ever.

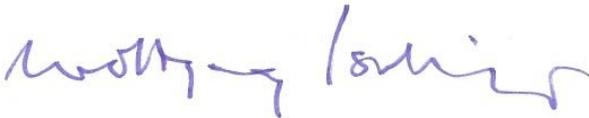
Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Richard Burt". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Ambassador to Germany Richard R. Burt
1985-1989



Ambassador to the U.S. Jürgen Chrobog
1995-2001



Ambassador to the U.S. Wolfgang Ischinger
2001-2006



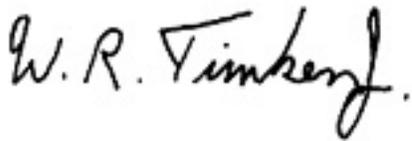
Ambassador to Germany Robert M. Kimmitt
1991-1993



Ambassador to Germany John C. Kornblum
1997-2001



Ambassador to Germany Philip D. Murphy
2009-2013



Ambassador to Germany William R. Timken
2005-2008



Ambassador to the U.S. Klaus Scharioth
2006-2011