

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

December 12, 2014

The Honorable John Kerry
Secretary of State
U.S. Department of State
2201 C Street, NW
Washington, DC 20520

Secretary Kerry:

As members of the German-American Caucus in the U.S. House of Representatives, we write to reaffirm our commitment to maintaining and strengthening the relationship between the United States and Germany, and respectfully request that the State Department maintain \$4 million for the Congress-Bundestag Youth Exchange (CBYX). The United States and Germany are two of the world's most powerful nations and leading economies, and the CBYX has served as an important conduit for fostering cultural exchange, educational advancement, and strengthening ties between our two nations.

Over the past several years, due to budgetary constraints, funding for the overall Educational and Cultural Exchange Programs account has remained static. Congress has not specified levels for the different programs within the account in an effort to provide the State Department flexibility to accommodate new priorities. However, the State Department has signaled its intent to reduce the \$4 million CBYX budget by half. As Members of the House German-American Caucus who recognize the critical importance of the CBYX, we believe reductions would have an adverse effect upon bilateral relations.

The CBYX has been in existence since 1983, and more than 23,000 individuals have participated in the program. With news of the pending reduction, the German Bundestag has pledged its support to fund the entire costs of the program for the current year. However, without a reaffirmed commitment to continue funding at the \$4 million level, the program will be in jeopardy beyond 2015.

At a time of growing unrest in Eastern Europe and Russia, increased violence in the Middle East, and trade negotiations ongoing between the United States and Europe, our relationship with Germany remains as vital as any time since the establishment of the CBYX. Accordingly, we urge you to ensure the program's longevity and pledge commitment to restoring the \$4 million level for 2015 and beyond.

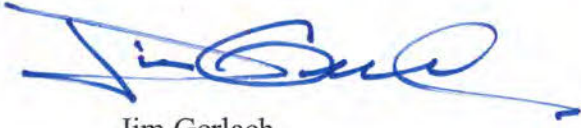
Respectfully,



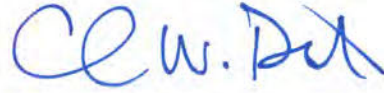
Glenn 'GT' Thompson
Member of Congress



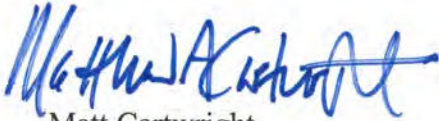
William Keating
Member of Congress



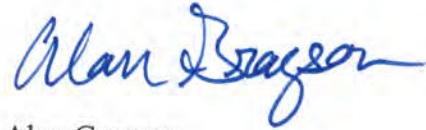
Jim Gerlach
Member of Congress



Charles W. Dent
Member of Congress



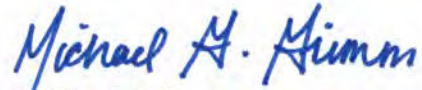
Matt Cartwright
Member of Congress



Alan Grayson
Member of Congress



Tom Marino
Member of Congress



Michael Grimm
Member of Congress