

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20510

February 18, 2014

The Honorable Rajiv Shah
Administrator
U. S. Agency for International Development
Ronald Reagan Building
1300 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20523

Dear Administrator Shah:


We are writing to raise concerns about the uncertain future of the Scholarships for Education and Economic Development (SEED) program which, as you know, is funded by USAID and functions at a number of post-secondary institutions around the United States—including schools in our states.


As you may know, an evaluation of the SEED program conducted at the behest of USAID and released last year found “the program fulfills objectives of personal advancement for rural dwellers, women and indigenous people, and encourages leadership through use of new strategies and techniques, and, from this perspective and compared to other programs, offers good value.” Furthermore, the program focuses specifically on two of the stated priorities of USAID’s 2011 Education Strategy Document: (1) “Improve reading skills for 100 million in primary grades . . .” and (2) “Improve ability of tertiary and workforce development programs to produce workforce with relevant skills to support country development goals.” Particularly in light of those two factors, we were disappointed to learn USAID may be considering walking away from a proven, successful program.

We urge you to reevaluate any decisions around ending the SEED program and move forward with a competition for a new cooperative agreement based on this successful model. In the meantime, because programming on a number of campuses in our states will come to an end this summer—costing valuable capacities that have served USAID well over a number of years—we urge you to extend the current cooperative agreement for at least one more year to provide the time necessary for a new competition to proceed in a proper manner.

Thank you for your leadership and we look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,


Tammy Baldwin
United States Senator


Tom Harkin
United States Senator

Kirsten Gillibrand

Kirsten E. Gillibrand
United States Senator

Ron Wyden

Ron Wyden
United States Senator

Michael F. Bennet

Michael F. Bennet
United States Senator

Roy Blunt

Roy Blunt
United States Senator

Mark Udall

Mark Udall
United States Senator