



FULBRIGHT ADVOCACY TOOLKIT

Constituent contact with politicians is the most effective means to increase support for a program or cause. Your members of Congress need to be educated by you about what the Fulbright Program is and what economic, political, and social effects it has in order to make informed decisions about supporting and funding the Program.

This toolkit is designed to provide an introduction to the basic advocacy issues facing the Fulbright Program and to offer some ideas of what Fulbright Association chapters and individual members can do to incorporate advocacy into regular activities.

Remember, legislators are public servants and they are in government to represent you. Make sure they know what is important to you!

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Key quotes:

“The simple, basic purpose of the exchange program we initiated over forty years ago is to erode the culturally rooted mistrust that sets nations against one another. Its essential aim is to encourage people in all countries, and especially their political leaders, to stop denying others the right to their own view of reality and to develop a new manner of thinking about how to avoid war rather than to wage it. The exchange program is not a panacea but an avenue of hope – possibly our best hope and conceivably our only hope for the survival and future progress of humanity.”

– Senator J. William Fulbright

“It’s better and cheaper to send scholars and students abroad rather than battalions.”

**– Congressmen Tom Cole (R-OK 4) and John Sarbanes (D-MD 3),
Fulbright alumni**

“In this century, the ability of nations to communicate and work with each other across borders will determine the fate of billions of people. The effectiveness of our response to pandemics, nuclear proliferation, environmental disasters, energy and food insecurity, and threats of conflict will depend foremost on the investments we have made in knowledge, relationships, and communications.”

– Senator Richard G. Lugar, speech to the Fulbright Association on the occasion of his acceptance of the 2016 J. William Fulbright Prize for International Understanding



Sample Activities

Watch our Advocacy Training Webinar hosted by former member of Congress Max Burns to learn how to:

- Schedule a meeting with your members of Congress in your local district office or in D.C.
- Prepare for a visit to your local district office
- Invite and host a member of Congress at your chapter event
- Follow up after a meeting or event

For Chapters:

- Appoint an Advocacy Director to lead and coordinate advocacy activities for the chapter. Inform the FA office of this.
- Invite members of Congress, their local staff, and the media to attend chapter events.
- Organize a chapter event focused on the Fulbright Program, the Fulbright Effect, or on aspects of international affairs and invite your representative or a member of his/her staff to speak.
- Recruit chapter members to respond to action alerts from the Fulbright Association national office and recognize their efforts at future meetings or with personal contact.
- Send the FA National Office copies of the letters/emails you've sent to members of Congress along with their responses. Share any photos taken with Members of Congress as well.
- Provide chapter members with sample letters to targeted leaders (members of the Administration, congressional representatives, local or state media) regarding the Fulbright Program.
- If the chapter has a newsletter, put your members of Congress and their local staff on the mailing list. Include advocacy updates in your chapter newsletter. If there is no newsletter, send regular letters to the members describing chapter events. Include photos.
- Write a statement in support of the Fulbright Program to be signed by chapter members and other concerned constituents to be sent to your members of Congress.
- Organize a team of 2-4 chapter members to visit your elected officials in their local district offices.

Share your personal story of your Fulbright experience. Talk about the influence that Fulbright alumni have in your local community in 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 member's office.



For individuals:

- Visit your members of Congress while they are in the district/state (please see the webinar on organizing an effective congressional visit). If in Washington, D.C., schedule visits to your state's congressional delegation on Capitol Hill.
- Prepare to talk to elected officials and staff about the economic impact that visiting international scholars have in your state and community. Print out your state's economic impact sheet and leave it behind in your member's office.
- Attend a town meeting or forum being held by the congressperson in your district. Prepare a thoughtful, concise question mentioning the Fulbright Program that will elicit a concrete response. If you would like assistance preparing a question, please contact Shaz Akram (shaz.akram@fulbright.org) at the Fulbright Association national office.
- Write to your members of Congress. Have a clear goal for each letter, but don't write only to ask for increased or "restored" funding. It is important to have a variety of contacts, especially with legislators.

Effective Communication

Online Communications

The Fulbright Association posts action alerts and updates about Fulbright Program funding to its website throughout the year. When submitting your action item to your members of Congress, please take a moment to add personal details about your Fulbright experience and how it specifically benefited your local community, and/or how it is an extremely cost-effective investment with a very high return.

Making Phone Calls

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 for making phone calls. After you hang up the phone with your member of Congress's office, please send us an email at advocacy@fulbright.org and 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 I am an active proponent of the Fulbright Program. I am calling today to urge Senator/Representative _____ to restore funding the Fulbright Program at \$252 million.



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 the Fulbright Association or 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 for 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)
Jeanne Shaheen (NH)
Christopher Coons (DE)
Jeff Merkley (OR)
Christ Murphy (CT)
Chris van Hollen (MD)

The Appropriations Process and Timeline

The process begins as the president offers a budget request. For Fiscal Year 2019, the Administration proposes to cut the Fulbright Program by 71%.

After the president submits a budget request, the budget committees in the House and Senate review the Administration's proposed budget and develop a budget resolution that reflects congressional spending priorities. The budget resolution, which is not binding, is intended to be a blueprint for the appropriations committees and includes targets for total spending, total revenues, and the deficit, as well as allocations, within the spending target, for discretionary and mandatory spending Appropriations Committee Action.

After the budget resolutions have been passed, the appropriations committees begin work on funding for individual departments and programs. With 13 appropriations bills to be passed annually, there are several subcommittees focusing on specific appropriations legislation. Funding for the Fulbright Program and other international educational and cultural exchanges is included in the appropriation for the Department of State.

The Senate and the House each pass their own version of each appropriations bill. Members of each appropriations committee then meet to reconcile differences between the two bills. The reconciled bill is then voted on in the respective chambers and sent to the president for their signature. The period before the conference committee meets is a critical time to contact participating members to reinforce your message of support for the Fulbright Program.

If the president vetoes the bill, then members of Congress enter into negotiations with the Administration to create a bill acceptable to all parties. Although the fiscal year officially begins on October 1, the appropriations process can continue through November and even December. During an election year, however, the legislative calendar can be abbreviated, with members running for re-election returning to their districts to campaign.