

CONGRESSMAN JOHN GARAMENDI (D-CA)
Peace Corps Reauthorization Act

MR. GARAMENDI: Mr. Chairman, thank you for allowing me to testify today. I am here to speak on behalf of my H.R. 3456, the “Peace Corps Reauthorization Act,” and respectfully request that you include my bipartisan legislation in any upcoming hearing with the Director of the Peace Corps.

I also want to thank my fellow Peace Corps Caucus co-chairs, Representatives Joe Kennedy (D-MA) and Garrett Graves (R-LA), for their support as original cosponsors.

Like successive generations of young Americans, my wife Patti and I answered President John F. Kennedy’s call and served in the Peace Corps in Ethiopia from 1966-1968.

Since the establishment of the Peace Corps’ in 1961, more than 230,000 American volunteers have served in 141 countries around the world. Today, there are some 8,000 Peace Corps volunteers serving in 65 countries.

However, Congress last reauthorized the Peace Corps in 1999 (Public Law 106-30), which expired at the end of fiscal year 2003.

Now more than ever, Congress must support the Peace Corps’ mission and realize President Kennedy’s vision of generations of young Americans, ready to serve their nation and make the world a better place.

Our “Peace Corps Reauthorization Act of 2019” would do just that by providing additional federal resources to better support current, returning, and former Peace Corps volunteers by:

- Authorizing \$450 million per fiscal year for the Peace Corps, an increase over the flat \$410 million funding level provided by Congress in recent years.
- Increasing monthly allowances for Peace Corps volunteers and leaders to \$417 per month of service completed, to reflect increases in the cost of living and provide \$10,000 for a full 2-year term of service.

- Extending Peace Corps volunteers' federal hiring preference during any hiring freeze, government shutdown, or while a volunteer receives worker's compensation benefits for an injury during their Peace Corps service.
- Increasing the workers' compensation rate for all Peace Corps volunteers injured or disabled during their service from a federal GS-7 to a GS-11 level, the same rate provided for Peace Corps volunteers with dependent children under current law.

As co-chair of the Congressional Peace Corps Caucus, I am proud to continue this work in support of the Peace Corps' mission, its volunteers, and the indelible impact their service has on the lives of needy people the world over.

I hope to work with you, Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member McCaul, and other Members of the Committee to advance the "Peace Corps Reauthorization Act" this Congress.

Our bipartisan bill is endorsed by the National Peace Corps Association.

So Mr. Chairman, will you please commit to working with us and holding a hearing?

Thank you, and I yield back the balance of my time.