

Testimony of Rep. James P. McGovern (MA-02)
FY 2026 Appropriations

National Security, State, and Related Programs Subcommittee
House Appropriations Committee
April 1, 2025

Thank you, Chairman Díaz-Balart and Ranking Member Frankel, for allowing me this opportunity to share with you a few of my concerns and priorities regarding the FY 2026 appropriations for National Security, the State Department, and Related Programs.

This is a challenging moment in navigating the appropriations process. We do not yet have the President's FY 2026 Budget Proposal, although one might be forthcoming.

We know what was in the statutory language of the FY 2025 Continuing Resolution, but in the absence of a Manager's Statement or a division report on programs provided under the NSRP Appropriations, it's difficult to understand how these funds will be allocated across programs, regions, and countries, let alone what the House and Senate Appropriations Chairs and Ranking Members agreed were priorities.

If the FY 2025 funds are to be allocated in a manner similar to FY 2024, then how does that congressional mandate apply to the dismantlement of USAID and the reorganization of the State Department that has happened over the past two months?

So, it's in this uncertain and unsettling context that I come before you today.

Because frankly, I feel like I'm operating in the dark, Mr. Chairman.

Many of the programs and priorities that I've supported in the past – and that have been priorities of yours, too, as reflected in the House NRSP bill and report for FY 2025 – have been decimated.

Among these are programs in the areas of global health, maternal and child health, food security and nutrition, basic education, and strengthening and promoting human rights, democracy, good governance, and the rule of law.

Having seen drafts of the proposal for the reorganization of the State Department, some of these programs might continue in a significantly diminished capacity and with bare bones staffing.

In the meantime, the entire on-the-ground infrastructure, staffing, and partnerships build up over decades of USAID investments and lessons learned have been shattered, destroyed.

Children who were once nourished through American programs and leadership, are now going without food, education, and health care. Some have already died or will die because of our broken promises.

This is all happening in the middle of a fiscal year, without any congressional authorization, approval, review or oversight.

In the private sector, this would be called breach of contract – and subject to criminal legal action and civil lawsuits.

In the space of days, U.S. programs that were approved by Congress and funded for FY 2025 were terminated. Staff were ordered to stop work. Funds were frozen, and to this day, most funds remain inaccessible.

The faith and trust established over decades of partnership and capacity-building, destroyed overnight.

I know that you understand, Mr. Chairman, that trust once broken is very difficult to repair, and in most cases, impossible to resurrect.

The institutional expertise to implement, oversee, and evaluate thousands of local programs and projects has been eliminated from service.

And whatever remnants of these programs that might remain, shoved into ill-fitting and ill-conceived bureaus and agencies, will lack the career experts and expertise to function.

Eliminating and severely cutting our many foreign assistance programs threaten U.S. jobs, businesses, and economy, as well as America's reputation, global stability, and national security.

Terminating these programs and eliminating USAID violates longstanding, bipartisan authorizing and appropriating legislation, which mandate the implementation of these programs along with Congressional oversight and accountability measures.

I ask you, Mr. Chairman and Madam Ranking Member, how in any way is this in the best interest of America's safety, prosperity, and security?

If anything, the safety, prosperity and security of the United States has been severely undermined by the actions taken over the past weeks.

The Constitutional role of Congress in being the **sole** power under Article One to appropriate funds has been ignored and cast aside.

These programs, these Congressionally mandated priorities, these career staff, international and U.S. NGO partners, our local and national partners in countries around the world, and the beneficiaries hoping to survive and to build better lives in their home nations did not deserve such treatment. No one deserves to be treated this way.

They are not criminals.

They are people who dedicated their lives to working for and with the United States to making the world better, more stable, safer, more secure, more productive, and to creating a more welcoming and prosperous environment for U.S. relationships, investments, goods, and services.

And we – not just this Administration – but we in Congress broke faith with them.

So, the question before this subcommittee as it looks to create funding and program priorities for FY 2026 is, “Will you stand up for these programs, these global priorities, these career staff, and institutional expertise by providing them the funding and institutional support they have proven they merit? Or will this Committee go along to get along and let over a half-century of investments, dedication, and expertise be destroyed? And along with it, the role of Congress in determining how U.S. funds will be allocated through the appropriations process?”

This is one of those moments where courage and fortitude are required. I, for one, will do all that I can to support this Committee as it rises to the occasion.