



One Hundred Nineteenth Congress  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Committee on Foreign Affairs  
2170 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

January 8, 2024

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

The Honorable Samantha Power  
Administrator  
U.S. Agency for International Development  
Ronald Reagan Building  
Washington, DC 20523

Secretary Blinken and Administrator Power,

As Chairman of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, I am concerned by the accelerated pace of proposed funding for controversial State Department and U.S. Agency for International Development programs in the final days of the Biden Administration.

In recent weeks, my office has been made aware of hundreds of millions of dollars of proposed obligations for initiatives that offer no clear national security benefit to the U.S. or its allies.

The American people sent a clear message in November that they will no longer tolerate uncontrolled spending on programs that are incompatible with the United States' interests abroad. As their representative, I cannot, in good faith, allow you to spend millions of dollars to combat climate change in the war-torn Middle East or fund LGBTQI awareness in Zimbabwe – both of which are among your recent proposals.

The rush to fund these and other controversial programs on the eve of a new administration contradicts President Biden's pledge to conduct a smooth transition and undermines critical Congressional oversight of taxpayer dollars spent abroad. As such, I am invoking the long-standing precedent granted to authorizing and appropriating committees to place a hold on these funds before they are obligated.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'B. Mast', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Chairman Brian J. Mast  
House Foreign Affairs Committee