

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

January 24, 2025

The Honorable Marco Rubio  
Secretary  
U.S. Department of State  
2201 C St., NW  
Washington, DC 20520

Dear Secretary Rubio:

We write today with deep concern over the lives placed at risk because of the Administration's freeze on foreign assistance funding. This freeze, mandated through President Trump's executive order titled "Reevaluating and Realigning United States Foreign Aid" also undermines American leadership and credibility around the world. United States foreign assistance programs promote stability in other countries to help stop crises from expanding directly to our doorstep. Foreign assistance is not a handout; it is a strategic investment in our future that is vital for U.S. global leadership and a more resilient world. It directly serves our national interests and demonstrates our credibility to allies, partners, and vulnerable people who rely on American assistance for survival.

Your recent direction to the Department of State and the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) to block all funding obligations and stop work on existing programs has immediate detrimental impacts, including possible closure of implementing partner organizations needed to carry out this work. Congress has appropriated and cleared these funds for use, and it is our constitutional duty to make sure these funds are spent as directed. These funds respond directly to your stated challenge of carrying out a foreign policy that makes the United States stronger, safer, and more prosperous.

The damage we risk is simply too high. For example, the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) currently provides 20.6 million people across 55 countries with anti-retroviral treatment for HIV/AIDS. The President's Malaria Initiative (PMI) provides 37 million mosquito nets and malaria medicines to 63 million people to prevent further spread of one of the world's deadliest diseases. These lives depend on an uninterrupted supply of medicines, and your pause in funding will cost lives.

World-altering events are currently unfolding in Syria and Lebanon, and it is undoubtedly in the U.S. national interest to shape these events. By pausing all of our current programs and not being able to respond to new opportunities, we cede this space to Iran and other adversaries and threaten to undermine promising regional developments.

For years, Republicans in Congress have decried what they see as a lack of U.S. credibility vis-a-vis countries like China, Russia, and Iran. Now our credibility is on the line, and it appears we will cut and run from American commitments to our partners around the world. In arbitrarily blocking our foreign assistance, we lose trust: from the people relying on this aid for survival whether in Gaza, Sudan, Haiti, Ukraine, or those standing in harm's way delivering this aid.

We urge you to immediately resume funding for ongoing U.S. foreign assistance programs so we can deliver on our commitments and save lives.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Gregory W. Meeks". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping underline.

Gregory W. Meeks  
Ranking Member  
Foreign Affairs Committee

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Lois Frankel". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping underline.

Lois Frankel  
Ranking Member  
Appropriations Subcommittee on  
National Security, Department of  
State, and Related Programs