

Community Letter to Congress: Pass the Foreign Aid Transparency & Accountability Act

By: George Ingram, Carolyn Miles, Connie Veillette, Sam Worthington
December 7, 2015



Dear Representative:

On behalf of both the Modernizing Foreign Assistance Network – a coalition of international development practitioners and foreign policy experts committed to strengthening development as a key component of U.S. foreign policy – and InterAction – the largest alliance of U.S.-based international development and humanitarian NGOs, with over 180 member organizations operating in every developing country – we are writing to express our strong support for the “Foreign Aid Transparency and Accountability Act of 2015” (H.R. 3766) sponsored by Representatives Ted Poe and Gerry Connolly.

U.S. foreign assistance budgets and programs should be transparent and based on rigorous evidence and learning to ensure the effectiveness of every dollar spent. H.R. 3766 would both establish evaluation guidelines for U.S. international development and economic assistance programs and centralize public access to data and reports through the existing

ForeignAssistance.gov aid transparency website. This legislation unanimously passed the House in 2012 and was again approved by the House Committee on Foreign Affairs in 2015. A

companion bill sponsored by Senators Rubio and Cardin was unanimously approved by the Senate Foreign Relations Committee in 2013 and again in 2015.

Specifically, the legislation would: 1) require the President of the United States to establish and implement uniform monitoring and evaluation guidelines – with measurable goals, performance metrics, and monitoring and evaluation plans – across U.S. international development and economic assistance programs; and 2) require the Secretary of State to ensure the ForeignAssistance.gov website contains detailed information regarding U.S. foreign assistance on a program-by-program and country-by-country basis that is updated quarterly. It would further require that analysis be undertaken by the Government Accountability Office to inform Congress on relevant agencies' adherence to these benchmarks.

While some progress has been made in recent years, today fewer than half of the more than two dozen federal departments and agencies involved in delivering U.S. foreign assistance have published data to ForeignAssistance.gov, and not enough meaningful aid information has been included. The time has come for the President to issue and oversee a set of common guidelines on the monitoring and evaluation of these programs and ensure that important aid information is available to the public. American taxpayers, along with partner country governments and citizens, deserve to have the ability to access comprehensive, timely, and comparable data on U.S. international development and economic assistance.

Given its strong bipartisan support in the previous sessions of Congress, we urge you to support and swiftly pass the “Foreign Aid Transparency and Accountability Act” to maximize the impact of our foreign assistance.

Sincerely,

George Ingram

MFAN Co-Chair

Brookings Institution

Carolyn Miles

MFAN Co-Chair

Save the Children

Connie Veillette

MFAN Co-Chair

The Lugar Center

Sam Worthington

President & CEO

InterAction

Endorsing Organizations (46):

1,000 Days

Alliance for Peacebuilding

Alliance to End Hunger

American Jewish World Service

Basic Education Coalition

Bread for the World

CARE USA

Center for International Policy

ChildFund International

Congressional Hunger Center

Data Transparency Coalition

Global Financial Integrity

Global Health Council

Global Integrity

Global Poverty Project

Global Witness

Government Accountability Project

Habitat for Humanity International

Helen Keller International

IFES

Institute for Sustainable Communities

InterAction

International Budget Partnership

International Youth Foundation

Mercy Corps

Millennium Water Alliance

Modernizing Foreign Assistance Network

ONE

OpenTheGovernment.org

Oxfam America

PATH

Pathfinder International

PCI (Project Concern International)

Plan International USA

Project On Government Oversight (POGO)

RESULTS

Save the Children

Smith Contracting

The Borgen Project

The Hunger Project

U.S. Fund for UNICEF

USAID Alumni Association

VEGA (Volunteers for Economic Growth Alliance)

WASH Advocates

WaterAid America

Women Thrive Worldwide