



Returned Peace Corps Volunteers of South Florida, Inc., P.O. Box 311044

Miami, Florida 33231

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*RPCVSF is  
registered in the  
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501(c)3*

Representative Mario Diaz-Balart  
8669 NW 36th Street  
Suite 100  
Doral, Florida 33166

August 28, 2012

Dear Representative Diaz-Balart,

Over fifty years ago, on March 1, 1961, President Kennedy signed the Peace Corps Act into law. Since that time over 190,000 Americans have served their country by working as teachers, builders, business advisors, health care workers, agricultural agents, youth leaders, and much more, in villages and cities around the world. They go not as high level officials but as ordinary citizens who volunteer two years of their life to work and learn alongside people very different, yet ultimately the same. And then they bring these experiences back to share with fellow Americans.

This is possible thanks to the generosity of American tax payers and the vision of leaders who understand that the Peace Corps represents the very best face of America to the world. President Kennedy understood that personal, grassroots connections between the people of our country and of others are the best way to promote peace and understanding. That is why, with conflicts in every part of the world and America's reputation diminished, we need the Peace Corps now more than ever.

Yet today the number of volunteers currently serving, about 9,000, is little more than half the number that served when the program started 50 years ago. In addition, more than twenty countries that have requested volunteers will not get them without more funding for the agency. In fact at current funding levels, fewer volunteers will be able to serve each year as costs for security and support rise.

As the Peace Corps recently celebrated its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary the time has come to America to recommit to the vision of the Peace Corps by expanding and improving the agency. Initiatives such as recruiting more older volunteers, targeting volunteer placements to match particular skill sets with local needs, and expanding the number of countries served will not happen without adequate funding. We therefore ask that you support Peace Corps at a level of \$400 million to maintain

the number of volunteers in the field and ensure their safety as mandated by the Kate Puzey Peace Corps Volunteer Safety Act passed in 2011.

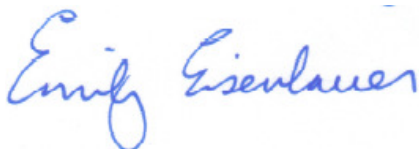
In addition we ask that you support language in the appropriations bill that supports and enhances Non-Competitive Eligibility (NCE) for Returned Peace Corps volunteers. This will ensure that the federal government is able to draw on the skills and experience of RPCVs for continued service at home.

Finally we ask that you support authorization for establishment of the Peace Corps Commemorative, to be built with no public funds on federal land near the Mall in Washington, D.C. This will honor the commitment of thousands who served their country for the cause of peace.

As Returned Peace Corps Volunteers we continue to serve our communities and Peace Corps countries by volunteering locally, supporting grassroots development projects in Peace Corps countries, and raising awareness of the countries and cultures where we served. We make presentations to schools and community groups, team with environmental education groups to educate underserved and minority children on the environment, and have raised over \$75,000 for our micro-credit loan program that assists Colombians displaced by violence in rebuilding their lives. We have about 200 active members in Miami-Dade and Broward, out of thousands of former Peace Corps volunteers who live in Florida, including prominent RPCV's such as Alberto Ibarguen, former Miami Herald editor, and Donna Shalala, University of Miami President and current RPCVSF member.

We hope that you will support the Peace Corps at this critical time, and look forward to further opportunities to discuss this issue with you.

Sincerely,



Emily Eisenhauer  
President, RPCVSF