

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

December 20, 2017

Mr. Mick Mulvaney
Director
Office of Management and Budget
725 17th Street NW
Washington, DC 20503

Dear Director Mulvaney,

As you discuss and develop the Administration's budget request to Congress for FY2019, we write to highlight the importance of the National Endowment for Democracy (NED) and the core institutes it supports, including the International Republican Institute (IRI) and the National Democratic Institute (NDI), which promote democratic values and support development and governance programming around the world.


As we understand, the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) is proposing substantial cuts to the NED budget that would prevent it from supporting the work of IRI and other core democracy institutes and organizations. Currently, the NED provides between one-quarter and one-third of IRI's annual budget. Losing such significant funding would severely undermine the advancement of democracy worldwide. The United States has a unique interest in shaping conditions in the world that allow our citizens to live in peace and freedom at home and abroad. Our nation has benefited tremendously from the spread of democracy across the globe, and it is important that we continue efforts to promote democratic values and an international order based on liberty, security, free markets, and rule of law.

President Ronald Reagan first envisioned the NED structure and its uniquely successful model when he proposed an initiative "to foster the infrastructure of democracy—the system of a free press, unions, political parties, universities." In honor of Reagan's vision and through his support, the NED was established by Congress to serve as the core grant-maker with its principal work carried out by its core institutes. These core institutes undertake critical groundwork towards peace and security, such as administering programs in the field to counter violent extremism, creating citizen security to reduce migration and refugee flows, building political resiliency to resist hostile spheres of influence, and improving governance and rule of law to advance American business interests.

Cutting funds to the NED would dismantle its current operational structure and sever its relationship with the institutes. Doing so would undermine the will of its founders, including President Reagan and a supportive Congress that has continued to provide robust funding to the NED since its establishment. Furthermore, it would be a clear violation of the NED Act, which has been a public law since 1983 and created the funding structure for the NED.

For these reasons, we respectfully request that you reconsider making substantial cuts to the NED's budget, which would effectively disable the vital work of IRI and NDI. These organizations are critical to our national security and help to create a more democratic and peaceful world.

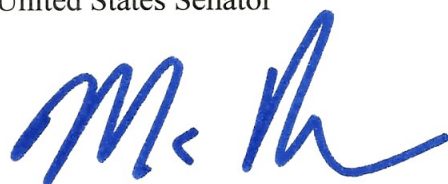
Sincerely,



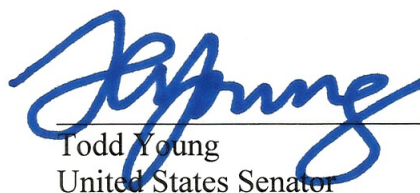
John McCain
United States Senator



Lindsey Graham
United States Senator



Marco Rubio
United States Senator



Todd Young
United States Senator



Dan Sullivan
United States Senator