

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

March 25, 2025

The Honorable Donald J. Trump
President of the United States of America
The White House
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Trump,

We write with dismay at the shuttering of the Congressionally authorized U.S. Agency for Global Media (USAGM) and cancellation of grants to USAGM networks and grantees, which collectively serve a historic, long-standing, and pivotal role in providing honest, comprehensive news coverage to countries that lack a free or open media environment. We urge you to immediately reverse your Executive Order regarding USAGM and restore and implement Congressionally appropriated funds for USAGM and its entities.

Since the beginning of the Cold War, Voice of America and the entire U.S. civilian broadcasting enterprise has been a hallmark of U.S. soft power combating the spread of false narratives from authoritarian regimes around the world. Today, USAGM and its constituent networks and grantees have two unique but impactful goals. First, USAGM works to expand freedom of information and expression. Second, USAGM works to share America's democratic experience. With a minimal annual budget, USAGM has grown its audience more than 21% over the last four years, which now totals 427 million unduplicated users across its networks. Audiences of USAGM entities consider their media content to be reputable, and the legislatively mandated "firewall" across all of USAGM's networks ensures editorial independence of its reporting.

USAGM and each of its entities and grantees will be disastrously impacted by this Executive Order. Voice of America, founded in the early 1940's, has served as a beacon of open and factual reporting for an audience of more than 350 million people in more than 49 languages. Despite a firewall in the People's Republic of China, VOA's Mandarin-language website saw a 72% increase in viewership in Fiscal Year 2024, beating out leading competitors. In Iran, VOA Persian's meaningful impact has led Iranian leadership to criticize it as a threat to Iranian national security. In Russia, despite efforts by the Russian government to deny access to VOA, VOA Russian article views increased by 20% in Fiscal Year 2024. Responses from authoritarian governments in China, Iran, and Russia demonstrate the effectiveness of VOA's work to counter harmful narratives from these governments and provide free and honest reporting to those seeking it.

Founded in 1950, Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty (RFE/RL) provides accurate and uncensored news in 27 languages to 23 countries across Europe and Eurasia where the media environment is threatened. Since 2021, monthly viewership across RFE/RL's Russian-language news content increased by more than 50 million. At the same time, numerous RFE/RL journalists have been targeted by regimes across the former Soviet Union, regimes which are threatened by RFE/RL's honest, fact-based reporting. Shuttering RFE/RL will enable governments in Russia, Belarus, Iran, and Central Asia to spread their own messages of regime propaganda without the fear of being held accountable by RFE/RL's award-winning reporting.

The Office of Cuba Broadcasting, which oversees Radio and Television Martí, provides the Cuban people with seven day a week coverage in one of the most restrictive media environments in the world. For decades, the Cuban people have lived under a regime which has taken their liberty, suppressed access to objective, fact-based information, and isolated the island from the outside world. Radio and Television Martí contribute to

breaking this isolation, and terminating grants to Martí will only benefit the Cuban regime and hurt the Cuban people.

The Middle East Broadcasting Network (MBN) makes use of a small annual budget to provide 24/7 relevant news and information in Arabic across the region. In closed and restrictive media environments across the Middle East and North Africa, MBN is uniquely placed to provide access to information about the United States to citizens of the region who seek to better understand America. As your administration seeks to bring peace to the Middle East, it remains vitally important that viewers of MBN receive honest and fact-based reporting of the goals of U.S. foreign policy in the region rather than harmful propaganda.

Launched in 1996, Radio Free Asia delivers uncensored news and information to audiences in China, Vietnam, North Korea, Laos, Cambodia, and Myanmar. From informing the world about the genocide in Xinjiang to reporting on the ongoing crisis in Myanmar, RFA's work holds regional governments to account. Eliminating RFA will only cede leverage to the People's Republic of China and other regimes in the region whose views on the world run counter to those of the United States and our closest allies.

Finally, the Open Technology Fund (OTF), founded in 2019, works to advance internet freedom in closed environments to enable citizens around the world to exercise their fundamental human rights online. As access to news and information evolves, OTF serves as a linchpin for accessing information in changing media ecosystems and today, more than 2 billion people use OTF-supported technology daily. From combating internet shutdowns to seizing on periods of opportunities in transitioning countries, OTF is key to protecting the safety and security of journalists and global citizens who seek access to credible and objective information regardless of their location. Moreso, USAGM's recently launched Frontline Media Fund and Global News Service would identify opportunities for advancing new approaches to content distribution and provide surge capacity during crises abroad.

The shuttering of USAGM and its damaging impact on its broadcasting entities and grantees will only work to help our adversaries in Russia, China, Iran, and North Korea and hurt U.S. credibility and global standing around the world. More directly, it will leave millions of people in closed and restrictive environments, from Havana to Caracas to Minsk to Tehran, less able to access information about the world around them. We strongly urge you to reconsider this Executive Order and ensure the critical work of USAGM and its broadcasting networks continues.

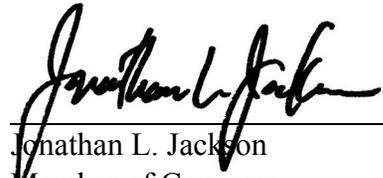
Sincerely,



William R. Keating
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Europe



Gregory W. Meeks
Ranking Member
House Foreign Affairs Committee



Jonathan L. Jackson
Member of Congress



Joaquin Castro
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on the Western Hemisphere
House Committee on Foreign Affairs



Dina Titus
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Ami Bera, M.D.
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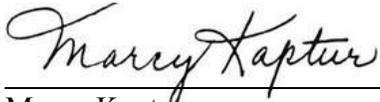
Jim Tokuda
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Derek T. Tran
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Sarah McBride
Member of Congress



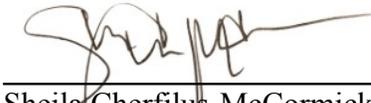
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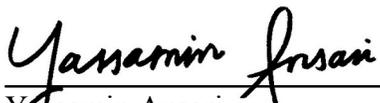
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Member of Congress



Mikie Sherrill
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Debbie Wasserman Schultz
Member of Congress

CC: The Honorable Marco Rubio

The Honorable Michael G. Waltz