

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

December 13, 2018

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

Dear Director Mulvaney,

We are writing to support efforts to improve the transparency and accountability of U.S. foreign assistance, including the implementation of the Foreign Aid Transparency and Accountability Act of 2016 (FATAA; PL 114-191). Congress passed FATAA with overwhelming bipartisan support to increase the transparency and evaluation of U.S. foreign aid by tracking, measuring, and allocating resources for maximum impact.

With better information about U.S. aid, decision-makers, taxpayers, partner countries, and civil society have a much clearer picture of where the U.S. is spending its money, for what purpose, and with what result. Furthermore, FATAA required the President to establish a high standard for agency evaluation policies to ensure a strong cross-agency commitment to monitoring and evaluating programs and to inform future projects and budgets.

Now, more than two years after the enactment of this landmark legislation, we request that you provide us and the relevant congressional committees a detailed written response and a briefing on the status of FATAA and FATAA-related implementation. Please include an assessment of progress made to date, a detailed timeline for completing all outstanding elements, and what congressional action, if any, would assist with implementation and the goal of greater transparency and accountability.

We are particularly interested in progress in the following areas:

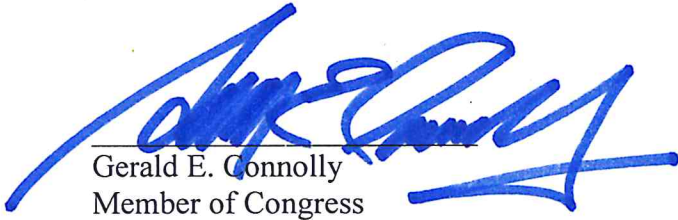
- *Agencies adopt strong evaluation policies.* Section 3 of FATAA requires the President to establish guidelines for agency “goals, performance metrics, and monitoring and evaluation plans...according to the best practices of monitoring and evaluation.” We welcome the robust guidelines published by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) in January, 2018. In Memorandum M-18-04, OMB encourages all agencies administering foreign assistance to put in place high-quality evaluation policies that adhere to these standards within one year – by January 11, 2019. Furthermore, OMB made a commitment to “require agencies to report annually

through the Budget submission process on implementation of monitoring and evaluation policies and practices related to these guidelines.” We expect all agencies to comply with OMB’s guidance by the January 11, 2019 deadline. We request that OMB provide us with a list of agencies that miss the deadline to establish evaluation policies, an assessment of agency adherence to this memorandum, and a timeline and plan for each covered agency’s full compliance.

- *Agencies publish timely, high-quality aid data.* Beginning in 2012, all U.S. agencies that fund or execute foreign assistance activities have been required to meet the specific reporting requirements of OMB Bulletin 12-01. Section 4 of FATAA continues this transparency principle by requiring covered agencies to report “comprehensive, timely, and comparable information” to an online, publicly available database within two years. OMB is responsible for reporting to Congress on agencies that did not fully meet these obligations, providing both an explanation and a plan for complete reporting. According to the ForeignAssistance.gov website, there are still a number of agencies which are not fully reporting their foreign assistance activities. We request that OMB provide a list of agencies that have not submitted comprehensive information about their covered U.S. foreign assistance programs to the Secretary of State, a list of agencies whose relevant information has not been published by the Secretary of State on foreignassistance.gov, a detailed assessment of where agencies are in their transparency compliance, and a timeline and plan for each agency’s full compliance.
- *Agencies consolidate duplicative aid dashboards, building on USAID’s Foreign Aid Explorer platform.* Section 4(d) also noted the existence of two U.S. foreign assistance platforms, State’s ForeignAssistance.gov (FA.gov) and USAID’s Foreign Aid Explorer (FAE). FATAA requested that, by the end of fiscal year 2018, the Secretary of State and the USAID Administrator “coordinate the consolidation of processes and data collection and presentation” for the two websites. That deadline has now passed. An analysis by the Modernizing Foreign Assistance Network and Publish What You Fund found that the two dashboards are “duplicative, contradictory, and incomplete to varying degrees.” The analysis recommended that the solution build upon FAE’s existing data and well-established data collection processes, and then fill in any needed functionalities and identify incomplete data. We endorse that solution. We request that OMB provide a full report on the efforts to consolidate these two websites, including any reactions to the joint analysis referenced above, and submit a plan for a consolidated dashboard as part of the President’s Fiscal Year 2020 Budget request.

Thank you for your prompt attention to this request. Please provide all requested information and a briefing by January 12, 2019. We look forward to continuing to work with you to advance the accountability and effectiveness of U.S. foreign aid.


Sincerely,



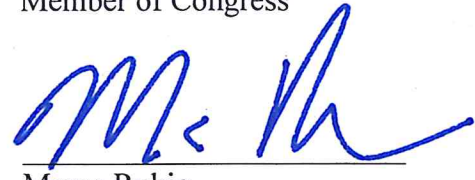
Gerald E. Connolly
Member of Congress



Ted Poe
Member of Congress



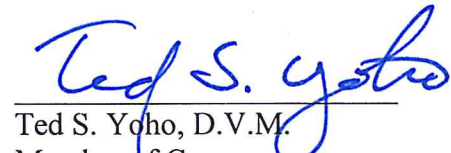
Benjamin L. Cardin
United States Senator



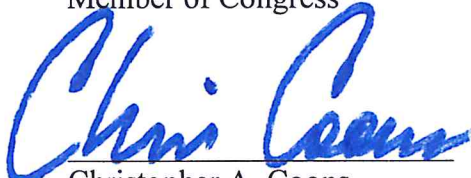
Marco Rubio
United States Senator




Adam Smith
Member of Congress



Ted S. Yoho, D.V.M.
Member of Congress



Christopher A. Coons
United States Senator



Johnny Isakson
United States Senator