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United States Senate

MAJORITY LEADER
COMMITTEES:
AGRICULTURE
APPROPRIATIONS
RULES AND ADMINISTRATION

October 11, 2017

Ms. Jane Eller
3624 Glen Oak Way
Lexington, Kentucky 40515-1214

Dear Ms. Eller:

Thank you for contacting me. I appreciate your taking the time to make me aware of your views, and I welcome this opportunity to respond.

As former chairman and current senior member of the Senate State, Foreign Operations Appropriations subcommittee—the panel responsible for the annual foreign aid bill—I am proud to play a role in the process which allocates funding for vital global poverty and global health programs. The United States government has tried to address ongoing humanitarian concerns in developing countries through several programs, and I believe that appropriate levels of American foreign assistance, when properly administered, can help promote stability, prosperity and freedom throughout the world.

In your correspondence, you mentioned your support for international assistance programs. On September 7, 2017, the U.S. Senate passed, and I voted for H.R.601, Continuing Appropriations Act, 2018 and Supplemental Appropriations for Disaster Relief Requirements Act, 2017. This funding vehicle—which was then passed by the U.S. House of Representatives and signed into law by President Trump on September 8, 2017—will fund federal government agencies and programs through December 8, 2017.

The Senate Appropriations Committee, on which I serve, recently passed out of committee the FY 2018 State, Foreign Operations Appropriations bill, which proposes funding levels for a number of U.S. foreign assistance programs. I certainly recognize the value and need for many of our nation's federal programs. However, I also believe it is crucial that our federal government continue to identify ways to reduce spending and work towards a balanced budget. Moving forward, I can assure you that I will keep your views in mind while I continue my work to produce responsible spending reforms that protect the interests of our most vital programs, put our fiscal house back in order, and get our economy back on its feet.

In your correspondence, you also inquired about U.S. foreign policy regarding Iran and North Korea. Like you, I am deeply concerned with recent developments involving these countries. The regime in North Korea presents serious threats to the security of our nation, to the safety of our regional allies like South Korea and Japan, to regional stability, and to the wellbeing of North Koreans themselves. The country continues to develop a nuclear program that threatens peace in the region and the world, routinely engages in cyberwarfare, and repeatedly commits gross human rights violations against its own people. Furthermore, the theocratic Iranian regime continues to destabilize the Middle East by sponsoring terrorism, by continuing to conduct ballistic missile tests, and by repeatedly calling for the destruction of America's strongest ally in the region—Israel.

Due to my profound concern with the national security of the U.S. and our allies, I used my position as Majority Leader to help facilitate the passage of the Countering America's Adversaries Through

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Sanctions Act, which became law on August 2, 2017. I was proud to vote for this bill which enhances our ability to hold Iran accountable by providing the U.S. government with additional enforcement tools and increasing coordination across agencies. This law imposes specific sanctions against perpetrators of human rights abuses and targets Iran's ballistic missile programs. This measure also imposes increased sanctions on North Korea and will help the U.S. hold North Korea accountable for its growing aggression and continued actions to advance its nuclear program. It is important that we remain vigilant in combatting those who threaten the U.S. and our allies, and I will be sure to keep your thoughts in mind should the full U.S. Senate consider further measures regarding Iran and North Korea.

Thank you for contacting me about these important matters. If you would like to receive periodic updates from my office, please sign up for my eNewsletter at www.mcconnell.senate.gov/, become a fan of my page on Facebook by visiting www.facebook.com/mitchmcconnell or follow my office on Twitter @McConnellPress.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mitch McConnell", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

MITCH McCONNELL
UNITED STATES SENATOR

MM/hh