

Democracy, Human Rights & Governance

COMMUNITY REQUEST FY 2020

\$2.4 B

FY 2019 President's Request: \$1.23 Billion

FY 2018 Enacted: \$2.31 Billion

DESCRIPTION

Democracy, Human Rights, and Governance (DRG) programs expand space for a vibrant civil society and independent media, strengthen political and government institutions to be responsive to citizens' needs, promote transparency and accountability, cultivate the rule of law, foster equitable economic growth, advance tolerance and inclusiveness, protect human and labor rights, and support credible elections.

WHAT DOES THIS BUY?

Funds are provided to partners through grants, cooperative agreements, and other mechanisms to implement programming that supports new and fragile democracies by helping them develop policies and practices to build effective, transparent, and accountable governments, empower citizens to ensure broad-based participation, strengthen the rule of law, mitigate conflict, cultivate respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, promote fair electoral processes and foster economic growth, combat gender-based violence and hate crimes, and support democracy activists worldwide.

JUSTIFICATION FOR THE REQUEST

- **Countries that strengthen democracy experience long-term benefits** including more positive economic reforms, reduced social conflict, increased private investment, and more opportunities for women, youth, people with disabilities, and other marginalized groups.
- Funding assists Zimbabweans in promoting a more democratic system of governance by advancing constitutional reforms for the protection of human rights, strengthening systems of accountability, and promoting civil society.¹ In 2018, successes in civil society led to the most democratic elections the country has ever seen.
- To promote inclusive dialogue among stakeholders in Ukraine, programs supported the establishment of the Election Reform Group, uniting Ukrainian civil society organizations and strengthening their influence in policy debates.
- In 2017, Liberia held elections paving the way for the first peaceful transfer of power in 73 years. U.S. contributions supported civic engagement, election infrastructure, and the neutral observation of polling stations.

U.S. INTEREST

- Funding promotes **American values** and supports efforts to achieve economic and political self-determination and realize individual rights.
- DRG assistance is a **cost-effective investment in U.S. foreign policy goals**. Stable democracies make better trading partners, provide new market opportunities for U.S. businesses, improve global health outcomes, and advance economic freedom and regional security. In an interconnected world, what happens inside countries transcends borders and regions, especially when it comes to terrorism, disease, and the flow of refugees. Democracy assistance protects our national security and reduces the likelihood of costly U.S. military engagement.
- At a time when export opportunities represent such critical growth potential for the U.S. economy and domestic job creation, it is essential for the United States to work toward creating and strengthening competitive markets throughout the world for American businesses and their products.



Looking to the Future

Democracy, Human Rights, & Governance – TITLE VII

BOLD VISION

- Additional investments could provide greater inclusion and a responsive government while supporting other development efforts.
- Additional investment in support for populations struggling under repressive governments and regimes, such as those in Iran, Venezuela, China, and Russia, could serve as a signal to the international community of America's unwavering support for democracy, rights, and governance.

IMPACT OF CUTS

- Cuts would increase the likelihood of emerging democracies backsliding into dangerous terrorist havens. Already destabilized places like Syria will sink further into chaos and undermine American security interests.
- Cuts would result in further chaos in places like the Middle East, undermining U.S. security interests. Cuts could also contract free trade and weaken markets for investment due to a lack of institutional stability and a weak rule of law.
- Cuts could create areas rife with corruption, weak rule of law, and other anticompetitive qualities causing U.S. companies to struggle to gain market share and sell products.
- Cuts could leave Russian and Chinese activities unchecked, undermining U.S. democracy, spreading disinformation, meddling in election processes, and destabilizing communities of interest to the U.S. and our allies.
- Cuts would undermine economic opportunity and stability, causing people to migrate in search of better livelihoods, increasing the numbers of political and economic refugees further straining already burdened support structures.

¹ "Democracy, Rights and Governance," USAID. <https://www.usaid.gov/democracy-rights-and-governance>.

5 YEAR FUNDING HISTORY

