

Economic Support Fund

COMMUNITY REQUEST FY 2020

\$4.13 B

FY 2019 President's Request: N/A

FY 2018 Enacted: \$3.97 Billion

DESCRIPTION

The Economic Support Fund (ESF) account provides economic assistance to advance U.S. political and strategic interests by helping countries meet political, economic, and security needs. Needs are addressed through a range of activities, including increasing the role of the private sector in the economy, assisting in the development of effective, accessible, and independent legal systems, supporting transparent and accountable governance, countering terrorism and extremist ideology, and empowering citizens.

WHAT DOES THIS BUY?

Funds are provided to partners through grants, cooperative agreements, and other mechanisms to implement programming to support trade and capacity building, strengthen independent judiciaries, protect human rights and freedom of the press, combat human trafficking and corruption, increase public accountability and access to justice, and protect civil society activists and journalists.

JUSTIFICATION FOR THE REQUEST

ESF funds support the following programming:

- **Democracy, Human Rights, and Governance:** Promotes democracy and human rights programs, which are integral to sustainable development and lasting peace. Countries with ineffective government institutions, rampant corruption, and weak rule of law have a 30-45% higher risk of civil war and extreme criminal violence than other developing countries.¹
- **Disability:** Addresses the needs and protects and promotes the rights of people with disabilities in developing countries.
- **Reconciliation Programs:** Facilitates direct communication between individuals of different ethnic, religious, and political backgrounds in countries affected by civil strife and war, including the Middle East and North Africa.
- **Rule of Law:** Strengthens independent judiciaries, protects human rights and freedom of the press, combats human trafficking and corruption, and increases public accountability and access to justice.
- **International Religious Freedom:** Supports the Office of International Religious Freedom and the Special Envoy to Promote Religious Freedom of Religious Minorities in the Near East and South Central Asia.

U.S. INTEREST

Stable democracies are good for business. Corruption and poor governance fuel economic instability. Investments in these programs ensure better worldwide market stability allowing American businesses to thrive and expand their investments.



Looking to the Future

Economic Support Fund – TITLE III

BOLD VISION

- Additional funding could enable the U.S. government to better respond to the root causes of conflicts that drive increasing humanitarian need around the world.
- Additional funds could contribute to greater stability in countries of strategic interest to the U.S., including Jordan, Iraq, Myanmar, and Colombia.
- Additional funds could transform schools into centers of learning and development for entire communities and allow for integration of programs in other sectors with schools and educational programs. Funds could be used for technical assistance to local governments to foster communities of learning and pursue comprehensive development efforts.

IMPACT OF CUTS

- Cuts could deepen food insecurity worldwide where 821 million people go to bed hungry every night, a number that continues to climb.² ESF supports Feed the Future, which works to alleviate food insecurity by building stronger food systems.
- Cuts could increase the likelihood of preventable violence. ESF funds support better governance and greater civil society participation in some of the most fragile countries around the world.
- Cuts could undermine efforts in fragile contexts where economic instability and hunger cause fragile environments to worsen. As the U.S. continues to face threats from abroad, ESF works to mitigate these concerns.

¹ “Democracy, Human Rights, and Governance,” USAID. <https://www.usaid.gov/democracy>.

² “Zero Hunger,” WFP. <http://www1.wfp.org/zero-hunger>.

5 YEAR FUNDING HISTORY

■ House ■ Senate *Funding levels may not accurately reflect those in the appropriations bills and/or reports due to rounding.*

