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United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON
HOMELAND SECURITY AND GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-6250

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August 1, 2014

The Honorable John F. Kerry
Secretary of State
Department of State
2201 C St. NW
Washington, DC 20520

Dear Mr. Secretary:

As a part of the Subcommittee's ongoing oversight of government spending, I am writing to request information about State Department reimbursement of costs incurred by ambassadors.

As you know, State Department ambassadors reside overseas in an official residence. Their responsibilities there include extending official hospitality to foreign dignitaries, receiving official deputations, and holding appropriate and dignified ceremonies.¹ Because the costs ambassadors incur in fulfilling these duties are considered official, rather than personal, the State Department reimburses ambassadors for these expenses, known as Official Residence Expenses (OREs).²

Some of the costs incurred by ambassadors for official functions may provide (or appear to provide) some personal benefit to the ambassador. To assist the Subcommittee in understanding how the State Department determines which expenses are eligible for reimbursement, I request that you provide the following information and documents:

- 1) The OREs for each mission for each of the past five years, including description of expenses;
- 2) The ambassador's salary for each mission for each of the past five years;
- 3) The number of ambassadors, including Career Service and Non-Career Service ambassadors, that have applied for ORE reimbursement each year for the last five years;
- 4) A description of the information that each ambassador must provide to receive ORE reimbursement;
- 5) The name, organizational chart, and contact information for the office that reviews ORE reimbursement; and

¹ Department of State, *Foreign Affairs Manual*, Vol. 3, Sec. 3251.1 (2014).

² Department of State, *Foreign Affairs Manual*, Vol. 3, Sec. 3250 (2014).

The Honorable John F. Kerry
August 1, 2014
Page 2

6) Any documents, policies or regulations to prevent waste, fraud and abuse of OREs.

I also request that you provide a briefing to Subcommittee staff regarding the State Department's oversight of OREs. I request you provide this information and briefing as soon as possible, but no later than **Monday, September 8, 2014**.

The jurisdiction of the Subcommittee on Financial and Contracting Oversight is set forth in Senate Rule XXV clause 1(k); Senate Resolution 445 section 101 (108th Congress); and Senate Resolution 64 (113th Congress).

I appreciate your assistance. Please contact Jackson Eaton or Caitlin Warner with the Subcommittee at (202) 224-6579 or (202) 224-7195 with any questions. Please send any official correspondence relating to this request to Kelsey_Stroud@hsgac.senate.gov.

Sincerely,



Claire McCaskill
Chairman
Subcommittee on Financial and Contracting
Oversight

cc: Ron Johnson
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Financial and Contracting Oversight