

**Coffman Calls on White House to End Peace Corps in China**  
***U.S. Taxpayers Subsidizing Education Costs for Chinese Government***

**(WASHINGTON)** – U.S. Rep. Mike Coffman, R-CO, asked his colleagues in Congress this week to sign on to a letter he wrote to President Barack Obama demanding the U.S. government immediately suspend the Peace Corps program in the People’s Republic of China where Peace Corps volunteers are teaching English in Chinese universities.

“Having the Peace Corps in China, where we have to borrow money from the Chinese to fund it, is an insult to every American taxpayer and to so many of our manufacturing workers who have lost their jobs to China,” said Coffman.

Coffman said he was under the impression that when Peace Corps volunteers were first sent to China in 1993, they wanted to work in underdeveloped rural areas, but instead Chinese government officials relegated them to teaching English in state-run universities.

Coffman stated in his letter that the U.S. government is short of money to fund its own higher education system while funding a Peace Corps program in China that defrays their higher-education costs, which he says is an affront to the American taxpayer given the U.S. debt problem.

“Education in China is under a state-run system; our contribution of teachers to the university systems means we are subsidizing the cost of the system for the Chinese government and borrowing the money from them to do it,” Coffman said in the letter to his colleagues.

The Obama administration currently is spending \$2.9 million in FY 2011 to fund the Peace Corps program in China and has requested an increase to \$4.7 million to fund Peace Corps operations in China for FY 2012. Coffman concedes that this is not a lot of money in the context of the federal government’s fiscal problems but he remains strongly opposed to the program.

“No doubt, this is certainly a small amount of money given the context of our deficit but it is symbolic of the arrogance and carelessness in how our tax dollars have been handled by Congress and the Obama administration,” said Coffman.

Please see below to read the text of the “Dear Colleague” letter:

Dear Colleague:

On a recent trip to China, I was shocked to learn how millions of U.S. taxpayer dollars are used to fund Peace Corps operations there, despite the fact that China recently became the world’s second largest economy.

What is even more troubling to me is that Peace Corps volunteers are restricted to teaching English in their university system. While we are struggling with our own very serious debt problem, we are sending millions of dollars to China, essentially subsidizing their higher-education costs—a \$2.9 million subsidy for this year and a \$4.7 million subsidy as requested for FY2012.

The higher education system in China is state-run and the Peace Corps website states, “Volunteers in this East Asian nation work in the area of education, focusing on teaching English to university-level students.”

The Vice President was recently in China and part of his mission was to convince the Chinese that holding U.S. debt is a good bet. We are literally borrowing money from China so we can fund a Peace Corps program in their country.

This is an insult to the taxpayers of the United States and to so many of our manufacturing workers who lost their jobs to the Chinese.

My letter requests that the Obama administration immediately suspend our Peace Corps program in China. If they will not do so, I will be offering an amendment to the Department of State, Foreign Operations and Related Programs appropriations bill that will eliminate funding for it. I ask you to join my efforts and to show we are serious about cutting unnecessary and

wasteful government spending.

For questions, or to cosign the letter to the president (attached), please contact Charles Cogar ( [Charles.Cogar@mail.house.gov](mailto:Charles.Cogar@mail.house.gov) ) in my office.

Sincerely,

Mike Coffman  
Member of Congress

Please see below the text of the referenced letter to the President:

September , 2011

President Barack Obama  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue  
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

In support of both the recent push for fiscal responsibility in our government's finances and the ongoing need to ensure U.S. taxpayer dollars are used only for programs that benefit them, we ask that you immediately suspend the U.S. Peace Corps program in China.

It has come to our attention that a request has been made that funding for Peace Corps operations in China be increased from \$2.9 million in FY 2011 to \$4.7 million in FY 2012. China has recently become the world's second largest economy, and we do not think there is any justifiable reason to be sending taxpayer dollars into their economy.

Even more troubling is the fact that the Chinese government insists our volunteers teach English at their universities. In fact, the Peace Corps website states, "Volunteers in this East Asian nation work in the area of education, focusing on teaching English to university-level students."

Higher education in China is state-run. This means our contribution of teachers to the university system lowers the cost of that system for the Chinese government. There is no sensible reason that U.S. taxpayers should be helping to defray expenses for the People's Republic of China, especially given the fact that we are short of money for our own education system, and that we are borrowing some of this money from the Chinese in the first place!

It is our sincerest hope that you take our concerns to heart about funding this program that is subsidizing the cost of higher education for China, particularly when we are struggling to adequately fund our own education system. We appreciate your time and thank you in advance for your consideration.

Sincerely,

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