



Wednesday, June 28, 2023

The Honorable Jack Reed  
Chairman  
Subcommittee on the Legislative Branch  
Senate Committee on Appropriations  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Deb Fischer  
Ranking Member  
Subcommittee on the Legislative Branch  
Senate Committee on Appropriations  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Reed and Ranking Member Fischer:

As you advance the fiscal year 2024 appropriations bill, we request that you include at least \$7,000,000 in dedicated funding to compensate interns on Senate committees. These funds would help open the doors for all to work in public service, including in Senate committees, regardless of a prospective intern's socioeconomic status.

As we work towards reducing unpaid internships, it is crucial to highlight the importance of having a separate allocation of funds dedicated to intern pay for each committee. A distinct pool of money designated for intern pay ensures transparent tracking of funds explicitly allocated for interns, enabling committees to demonstrate their commitment to fair compensation and equal opportunities for their interns. A separate committee allocation for intern pay provides Senate committees with the flexibility to address their respective intern programs' unique needs and demands. Not all committees have the same number of interns or face identical financial circumstances. Committees can tailor their compensation packages by having dedicated funding, similar to personal office funds, to attract and retain talented interns who are critical to effectively supporting the committee's work.

By providing appropriate compensation, committees can foster a more inclusive and diverse internship program that attracts individuals from different socioeconomic backgrounds, ensuring broader representation and a much-needed fresh perspective within the Senate. Additionally, having dedicated committee funding will address the issue of unpaid legal internships. Currently, committees are often posting yearlong unpaid legal internships with Senate Committees. This funding can offer stipends or allowances that alleviate financial burdens, enable interns to focus

on their work without compromising their basic needs, and ensure the prevalence of unpaid legal internships within committees is obsolete.

It's been argued that if committees wanted to pay their interns, they could utilize the existing resources within their personal offices to cover the expenses. However, personal offices typically have limited budgets, and their internship allocations are specifically for paying their office interns. Relying solely on their existing resources may not adequately support committee interns. Dedicated funding enables them to set clear objectives, establish structured programs separate from the personal office funding, and provide necessary resources and support for interns throughout their time with Senate committees.

While internships serve as valuable opportunities for students and recent graduates to gain practical experience, the burden of unpaid work disproportionately affects individuals who are unable to afford unpaid internships. Therefore, it is crucial to establish a separate allocation of funds specifically designated for Senate committee interns.

We are grateful for your leadership on this issue and request your support for this fund.

Sincerely,

Pay Our Interns

College to Congress

Demand Progress

Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies

The Modernization Staff Association

Representative Democracy

Lorelei Kelly, Georgetown Democracy, Education + Service at the McCourt School of Public Policy\*

\* = Title for identification purposes only.