

United States Senate

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November 17, 2017

The Honorable Rex Tillerson
Secretary of State
Department of State
2201 C Street NW
Washington, DC 20520

Dear Secretary Tillerson:

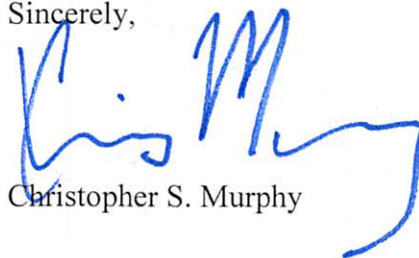
I am writing to express deep concern about the plans for buyouts of Foreign and Civil Service employees at the Department of State and to request an immediate explanation of the need for diminished diplomatic staffing levels at a time of unprecedented global challenges.

The *New York Times* reported on November 10 that the Department confirmed buyouts of up to \$25,000 for approximately 640 employees, as part of an effort to reduce the overall national security workforce at the State Department by approximately 2,000 employees. I understand that nearly all employees would be eligible for the buyout, with the exception of those with specialized career paths including information technology and human resources. It is also my understanding that the amount of buyout compensation an employee is eligible for would depend on his or her length of service, incentivizing those with more experience and expertise to leave the Department.

Offering buyouts to employees with specialized, highly valuable language skills and regional expertise that the Department has spent many years and millions of dollars to hone is short-sighted and dangerous. It would take the Department decades to build up this level of expertise at a time when our need for diplomatic solutions to complex global problems is at an all-time high. No similar workforce reduction is taking place at other national security agencies.

I appreciate your prompt explanation of the need for decreased diplomatic staffing and the steps you are taking to ensure the Department retains the employees whose skills it has invested tremendous resources in cultivating.

Sincerely,



Christopher S. Murphy