



April 2, 2025

U.S. House of Representatives
House Committee on Appropriations
Subcommittee on National Security, Department of State, and Related Programs
The Honorable Mario Diaz-Balart, Chair
The Honorable Lois Frankel, Ranking Member

FY 2026 Written Testimony for the Hearing Record

Dear Chair Mario Diaz-Balart and Ranking Member Lois Frankel:

The American Institute of Architects (AIA) represents over 100,000 architects and design professionals. For nearly 170 years, AIA has been committed to safeguarding the public's health, safety, and welfare, and to the improvement of our nation's quality of life through the built environment. Central to that mission is ensuring that buildings all over the world are held to high standards and protect the security, resilience, and stewardship of American Diplomats.

AIA respectfully submits the following recommendations for appropriations in the FY 2026 National Security, Department of State, and Related Programs for your consideration.

\$1,907,073,000 for the Bureau of Overseas Building Operations

The Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations (OBO), funded through the Embassy Security, Construction and Maintenance (ESCM) appropriation, is responsible for providing U.S. Diplomatic and Consular missions overseas with secure, safe, and functional facilities to assist them in achieving the foreign policy objectives of the United States. It is the single real property manager for the planning, acquisition, design, construction, operations, maintenance, and disposal of U.S. governmental diplomatic and consular property overseas. OBO manages a portfolio of over 25,200 assets valued at over \$90 billion at 291 locations worldwide and is currently executing over \$20 billion of ongoing construction. These buildings serve as critical representations of American values, offering a secure environment for diplomacy, international relations, and the protection of U.S. citizens abroad.

Proper investment ensures that these buildings are designed and maintained to meet evolving security needs, sustainability standards, and architectural excellence. Additionally, as global landmarks, these structures must blend functionality with aesthetic significance, reflecting both the U.S.'s commitment to innovation and its respect for the diverse cultures in which they reside. Sustaining funding for OBO guarantees that these vital facilities remain state-of-the-art, resilient, and capable of fostering positive global engagement for years to come.

The American
Institute of
Architects

1735 New York
Avenue NW
Washington, DC
20006

T (800) 242 3837
F (202) 626 7547

aia.org

AIA urges your support for the recommended appropriation. Investing in the design, construction, and maintenance of secure, functional, and sustainable buildings is crucial for advancing U.S. foreign policy and protecting American interests abroad. If you require more information, please reach out to Derek Washam at Derek.Washam@aia.org.

Thank you for your consideration.