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May 8, 2018

The Honorable Paul Krekorian
Chair, Budget and Finance Committee
Los Angeles City Council
c/o City Clerk
Room 395 City Hall
200 N. Spring Street
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Dear Councilman Krekorian:

IVCLA is honored and appreciative of the City of Los Angeles's participation in our mission and for the financial support of our annual \$40,000 grant. Since our beginning 38 years ago, we have valued our strong relationship with the City. This is why we are extremely distressed and disappointed the Mayor's 2018 budget cut the IVCLA grant in half.

The \$20,000 cut will devastate our ability to create strong programming for the hundreds of international visitors who are chosen each year by U.S. Embassies around the world through the International Visitor Leadership Program (IVLP), as well as the participants who come to L.A. through the other international exchange programs we coordinate. Although our work is an important component for the United States' public diplomacy efforts, it is equally important to our community.

We are proud the City strongly supports City Diplomacy during a time of increasing retreat from international collaborations at the national level. IVCLA plays an important role in L.A.'s City Diplomacy, as we remain dedicated to keeping dialogue open between the people of Los Angeles and the rest of the world.

Despite the importance of our accomplishments, our financial challenges remain:

- IVCLA maintains a highly cost effective budget with no waste.
There is no room for any cuts to be made to our expenses.
- Two full-time Program Officers make all the arrangements for the nearly 1,000 visitors IVCLA hosts each year.
The City Grant amount covers the salary for one Program Officer.
- One part-time Program Assistant provides essential support for the Program Officers.
The \$20,000 cut means we cannot afford the part-time Program Assistant.
- IVCLA Program Officers currently accept all the international participants selected to come to Los Angeles, even though ***their work load is already at capacity.***

Therefore, due to the loss of our part-time staff person our programming capacity will be cut by 21% and we will have to turn-away visitors. In 2017 IVCLA visitors paid \$135,967 in hotel taxes. ***The \$20,000 cut will DECREASE the hotel room taxes paid by IVCLA international visitors by \$28,500***

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Although the global, national and local benefits of our work are huge, our office is a small non-profit. In addition to our programming responsibilities, we work hard organizing local events, trying to increase our membership and soliciting for sponsorships. Still our budget remains extremely tight as increasing expenses match any gains we make in revenue through our fundraising efforts.

Our extremely dedicated staff knows the professional appointments and cultural excursions we arrange for international influencers every day, throughout every district in the city, is providing fact based information for them to take home and share with others. And they know the Angelinos who meet with them, either as a professional resource or as an IVCLA member hosting them for dinner, are able to form opinions about situations in other countries through first-hand information from experts. These connections also promote Los Angeles as a destination for return visits and future collaboration.

We could list many pages of examples about meetings IVCLA has arranged that challenge stereotypes; that inform the visitors about the organizations, businesses and people who thrive in Los Angeles; and that forge solid links in the global marketplace. Below are just a few examples:

Last month we arranged a program for an IVLP group from Korea who were here to discuss *Disability Rights*. One of the meetings we arranged was with **Shane's Inspiration**, a wonderful organization that develops universally accessible playgrounds, allowing children with disabilities to play side-by-side with their able-bodied peers, creating a truly integrated environment where compassion and acceptance can flourish. It also provides community outreach, education, and transportation programs to overcome the barriers of bias and fostering friendships and understanding among children of all abilities. The Korean participants were provided a tour of **Rocket's Universe Playground at North Weddington Park** to see for themselves how children enjoyed the accessible playground. They found the concept extremely interesting and hope to continue discussions with Shane's Inspiration.

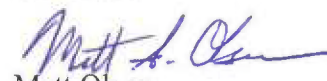
Last week IVCLA arranged for an IVLP group from Tajikistan, whose topic was *Countering Violent Extremism Through Media and Messaging Strategies*, to meet with the City's Office of Gang Reduction and Youth Development. The group found the meeting very useful and hopefully will continue collaborations with the office and the others resources we arranged for them to meet such as Homeboy Industries, Dr Erroll Southers at USC, and Timelist Group.

Councilman Krekorian we hope you and the entire Budget and Finance Committee believe sharing best practices globally, which we facilitate daily on many important topics, is a valuable part of L.A.'s City Diplomacy. We hope the City Council will fully fund our \$40,000 grant, allowing us to continue our important work.

Sincerely,


Janet Elliott
President

Sincerely,


Matt Olsen
IVCLA Board Chair