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Two groups sorry to see Tom Petri go in Wisconsin's Peace Corps community

Madison, Wisconsin—There are two groups in Wisconsin who were particularly sad to see Tom Petri leave Congress when he retired last year: the Returned Peace Corps Volunteers of Wisconsin-Madison, and the Milwaukee Peace Corps Association.

Why? It is because our Congress needs people like Representative Petri, who served in Peace Corps Somalia from 1966 to 1967. He saw the face of poverty and struggle up close, and worked to change it. Returned Peace Corps Volunteers (RPCVs) bring a global awareness to everything they do. From “[A Call to Peace](#)” survey conducted by the [National Peace Corps Association](#), 74 percent of RPCVs surveyed believed service helped the U.S. adapt to globalization, 66 percent said it improved U.S. foreign policy, and over half (51 percent) believed it had an effect on improving national security. Petri’s particular attention to the important role of education, including policy for improved education for our youth, may or may not be a direct result of Peace Corps. However we believe we can confidently state that his experience in Peace Corps played a role in strengthening his resolve.

Peace Corps is a non-partisan federal organization. The people who choose to volunteer may be viewed to express a particular liberal brand of social justice, but human compassion and awareness should not be an indicator of which political party one belongs to. Representative Petri, as a Republican in the 6th District in our purple state of Wisconsin, has proved that point very well during his tenure in the House.

Petri has been the only Republican RPCV serving in Congress since 2010, and his departure marks the first time in 35 years that the House of Representatives will not have a Republican RPCV in its ranks. In November 2013, he joined with the other four Congressional RPCVs to form a [Peace Corps Caucus](#). The intent of the Caucus is to give lawmakers the opportunity to stay attuned to legislation issues that impact the Peace Corps and its ability to perform its mission of promoting world peace and friendship. By mid-2014, over 83 members had joined.

The Madison and Milwaukee RPCV groups hope that the Caucus number will grow with the new Congressional delegation in Washington who will be sworn-in at noon on Monday, January 6, 2015. More importantly, we hope that more legislators will be convinced of the important role that Peace Corps Volunteers play not only during their service, but upon their return and for the rest of their lives. We call on Congress to support initiatives and increased funding for the agency.

Meanwhile, we welcome Tom to the good life in Wisconsin.

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