

# AMBASSADORS (SLUSH) FUND

## QUICK STATS

- ✘ **CONFERENCE:** Spending
- ✘ **TEAM:** Department of State
- **FUMBLE:** \$5.75 million
- **RECOVERY:** U.S. spending abroad should advance American national interests

In 2014, State spent \$700,000 to conserve a Buddhist temple in Vietnam<sup>264</sup>, \$40,000 to document Bengal folk music in India<sup>265</sup>, and \$33,000 to preserve Jamdani weaving traditions in Bangladesh.<sup>266</sup> Through the years American taxpayer dollars have their been used to pick up the tab to rebuild ancient mud forts in Pakistan,<sup>267</sup> fund a log house museum in Russia,<sup>268</sup> and preserve ancient dialects in South America.<sup>269</sup> The American public has borrowed money from China to fund the construction of a welcome grotto on a Buddhist temple in China.<sup>270</sup>

Projects like these add up to \$5.75 million per year in State’s annual allocations to its Ambassadors Fund for Cultural Preservation,<sup>271</sup> which is used to support “the preservation of cultural sites, cultural objects, and forms of traditional cultural expression” around the world.<sup>272</sup> While altruistic in nature, there is little room for such feel-good spending on programs that do little to advance Americans interests. There are plenty of avenues for American ambassadors and diplomats to responsibly help other nations,

rather than funneling money into international historic reconstruction projects.

## RECOVERY

It is not justifiable to expect American families to spend millions to help preserve other nations’ cultures—many of whom are capable of preserving their own cultural sites and artifacts. It is past time to end this program once and for all. During the next appropriations season, Congress should simply eliminate the Ambassadors Fund for Cultural Preservation. When Americans complain about foreign aid, this is what they mean.



*Photo: State Department*

***For more information, please visit:***

***[U.S. Department of State: U.S. Ambassadors Fund for Cultural Preservation 2014](#)***