



“I see a day when the noble banner of human rights and justice will proudly wave over every corner of the world.” -Tom Lantos

The Lantos Congressional Fellows Program

The human rights movement gained a place of unprecedented importance in the U.S. Congress during the nearly three decades of Congressman Tom Lantos’ service. Lantos, the only survivor of the Holocaust to be elected to Congress, co-founded and co-chaired the Congressional Human Rights Caucus (CHRC) and fought tirelessly to ensure that human rights issues played a significant role in the legislative agenda.

The Lantos Foundation plans to establish the Lantos Congressional Fellows Program in an effort to continue the vital human rights work that Congressman Lantos spearheaded. The purpose of the program will be two-fold:

- To give bright, young scholars and future leaders with a specific interest in human rights the opportunity to work in the U.S. Congress and gain a greater understanding of the American legislative process
- To provide the U.S. Congress with a perspective on human rights and to ensure that human rights remains an important focus of the Congressional legislative agenda

The Fellows

The Lantos Foundation intends to select six Lantos Fellows on an annual basis. A total of four fellowships will be available with the U.S. House of Representatives and two will be available with the U.S. Senate.

Lantos Fellows will be selected based on the merits of their academic performance, professional experience, and their commitment to furthering the cause of global human rights. Candidates for fellowships will be students or recent graduates of higher education.

Focus on Israeli Scholars & Future Leaders

In keeping with Congressman Lantos’ unwavering support for Israel, the Fellows Program will include a component specifically geared towards bringing Israeli scholars and future leaders to the U.S. Congress as Lantos Fellows. The U.S./Israel element of the program will have the additional purpose of serving to strengthen ties between future leaders of the State of Israel and U.S. governmental leaders. Initially, the program may focus heavily on this group of Fellows, but the Lantos Foundation envisions that the program will eventually accept applicants and select Fellows from all regions of the world.

The Fellowship Experience

The Lantos Foundation intends to offer full funding for Lantos Fellows – comparable to room, board, and a stipend for living expenses – for the duration of the Fellowship. The Foundation will likely offer 6 to 12-week fellowships at the outset of the program. However, as the program grows and expands, the Foundation hopes to be able to offer full funding for fellowships lasting 6 months and eventually a full year.

Fellows will be given the opportunity to work on either the personal staff of a representative or senator, as a member of a Committee staff, or occasionally as a Human Rights Caucus staff member. The Foundation hopes to quickly extend the length of the Fellowships to a full year, as this will give the Fellows a far deeper, more complete understanding of the U.S. Congress and the ways in which the Congress can make human rights a priority for U.S. policy and decision making.

Long-term Perspective

It is the hope and goal of the Lantos Foundation that alumni of the Lantos Congressional Fellows Program will go on to be leaders in the human rights movement, whether in their native countries or within the United States.

In particular, the Foundation envisions a portion of the Lantos Fellows going on to work in Congress and striving to champion the cause of human rights on Capitol Hill.

Congressman Lantos was known for his willingness to explain and discuss important issues – particularly those related to human rights – with even the most junior intern. He felt a great imperative to educate and mentor future leaders about the moral obligation to fight for human rights. Through a Fellows Program named in his honor, the Lantos Foundation hopes to continue this important undertaking.