

110TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 947

To empower women in Afghanistan, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

FEBRUARY 8, 2007

Mrs. MALONEY of New York (for herself, Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas, Mr. ABERCROMBIE, Mr. MOORE of Kansas, Mr. CONYERS, Ms. WOOLSEY, Mr. McNULTY, Mr. SCHIFF, Mr. MORAN of Virginia, Ms. SCHAKOWSKY, Ms. SHEA-PORTER, Mr. GRIJALVA, and Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Affairs

A BILL

To empower women in Afghanistan, and for other purposes.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Afghan Women Em-
5 powerment Act of 2007”.

6 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

7 Congress makes the following findings:

8 (1) Under the oppressive rule of the Taliban,
9 the women of Afghanistan were denied the most
10 basic human rights and fundamental freedoms, in-

1 including the rights to life, work, education, health
2 care, movement, expression, and religion.

3 (2) Many women who attempted to assert their
4 rights under the Taliban regime were subjected to
5 beatings and imprisonments, and many suffer from
6 the long-term consequences of such oppression.

7 (3) Women in Afghanistan have one of the
8 highest maternal mortality rates in the world, with
9 an estimated 1,600 deaths per every 100,000 live
10 births.

11 (4) Despite efforts by the United States Gov-
12 ernment and the international community to improve
13 the lives of women and girls in Afghanistan, many
14 women and girls continue to lack access to basic
15 services, including health care and education. Ap-
16 proximately 80 percent of Afghan women are illit-
17 erate.

18 (5) Today, women and girls in Afghanistan still
19 face oppression resulting from violence and intimid-
20 ation by the Taliban, other religious extremists, and
21 militia groups within their communities. In recent
22 months, there has been a significant increase in the
23 number of attacks against girls' schools in an at-
24 tempt to prevent women and girls from regaining
25 their rights and freedoms.

1 (6) According to the United States Commission
2 on International Religious Freedom, the absence of
3 clear protections for the right to freedom of religion
4 or belief for individual Afghan citizens has resulted
5 in a growing number of criminal prosecutions and
6 other official actions against individuals, including
7 women, for exercising their basic rights.

8 (7) The strengthening of institutions and other
9 actors, such as nongovernmental organizations, in
10 Afghanistan is essential to building a civil society
11 and holding the Government of Afghanistan to its
12 international obligations under the International
13 Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and other
14 international instruments to protect and ensure the
15 rights of women.

16 **SEC. 3. SENSE OF CONGRESS ON WOMEN'S RIGHTS IN AF-**
17 **GHANISTAN.**

18 It is the sense of Congress that—

19 (1) the protection of the rights of women and
20 girls in Afghanistan and their full participation in
21 the reestablishment of democracy is essential to the
22 reconstruction of a stable and democratic Afghani-
23 stan, and to achieve such a reconstruction, the
24 United States Government must continue to commit

1 resources to advance the rights of women through-
2 out Afghanistan;

3 (2) the United States Government should pro-
4 vide strong support for the Afghan Ministry of
5 Women's Affairs and the Afghan Independent
6 Human Rights Commission, both of which were cre-
7 ated by the Agreement on Provisional Agreements in
8 Afghanistan Pending the Establishment of Perma-
9 nent Governing Institutions, done in Bonn, Decem-
10 ber 5, 2001 (commonly known as the "Bonn Agree-
11 ment") to remedy past violations of women's rights
12 and human rights and to establish institutions and
13 programs to ensure policies that advance such
14 rights;

15 (3) the United States Government should make
16 it a priority to provide assistance to Afghan-led non-
17 governmental organizations, particularly Afghan
18 women-led nonprofit organizations; and

19 (4) grants and assistance to Afghanistan should
20 be conditioned upon the Government of Afghanistan
21 adhering to international standards for women's
22 rights and human rights, including the internation-
23 ally recognized right to freedom of thought, con-
24 science, and religion or belief.

1 **SEC. 4. ASSISTANCE TO WOMEN AND GIRLS.**

2 Section 103(a)(7) of the Afghanistan Freedom Sup-
3 port Act of 2002 (22 U.S.C. 7513(a)(7)) is amended—

4 (1) in subparagraph (A), by striking clauses (i)
5 through (xii) and inserting the following:

6 “(i) to provide equipment, medical
7 supplies, and other assistance to health
8 care facilities for the purpose of reducing
9 maternal and infant mortality and mor-
10 bidity;

11 “(ii) to establish and expand pro-
12 grams to provide services to women and
13 girls suffering from mental health prob-
14 lems, such as depression, anxiety, and
15 posttraumatic stress disorder;

16 “(iii) to expand immunization pro-
17 grams for women and children;

18 “(iv) to protect and provide services to
19 vulnerable populations, including widows,
20 orphans, and women head of households;

21 “(v) to establish primary and sec-
22 ondary schools for girls that include math-
23 ematics, science, and languages in their
24 primary curriculum;

1 “(vi) to expand technical and voca-
2 tional training programs to enable women
3 to support themselves and their families;

4 “(vii) to maintain and expand adult
5 literacy programs, including economic lit-
6 eracy programs that promote the well-
7 being of women and their families;

8 “(viii) to provide special educational
9 opportunities for girls whose schooling was
10 ended by the Taliban and who now face
11 obstacles to participating in the normal
12 education system, such as girls who are
13 now married and girls who are older than
14 the normal age for their classes;

15 “(ix) to disseminate information
16 throughout Afghanistan on the rights of
17 women and on international standards for
18 human rights;

19 “(x) to provide information and as-
20 sistance to enable women to exercise prop-
21 erty, inheritance, and voting rights, and to
22 ensure equal access to the judicial system;

23 “(xi) to provide legal assistance to
24 women who have suffered violations of
25 their rights;

1 “(xii) to increase political and civil
2 participation of women in all levels of soci-
3 ety, including the criminal justice system;

4 “(xiii) to provide information and
5 training related to women’s rights and
6 human rights to military, police, judicial,
7 and legal personnel;

8 “(xiv) to provide assistance to the
9 Ministry of Women’s Affairs and the Af-
10 ghan Independent Human Rights Commis-
11 sion for programs to advance the status of
12 women; and

13 “(xv) to develop and implement pro-
14 grams to protect women and girls against
15 sexual and physical abuse, abduction, traf-
16 ficking, exploitation, and sex discrimina-
17 tion, including providing emergency shel-
18 ters for women and girls who face danger
19 from violence.”; and

20 (2) by restating subparagraph (B) to read as
21 follows:

22 “(B) AVAILABILITY OF FUNDS.—For each
23 of the fiscal years 2008 through 2010—

24 “(i) \$5,000,000 is authorized to be
25 appropriated to the President to be made

1 available to the Afghan Ministry of Wom-
2 en's Affairs for the administration and
3 conduct of its programs;

4 “(ii) \$10,000,000 is authorized to be
5 appropriated to the President to be made
6 available to the Afghan Independent
7 Human Rights Commission for the admin-
8 istration and conduct of its programs; and

9 “(iii) \$30,000,000 is authorized to be
10 appropriated to the President for grants to
11 Afghan women-led nonprofit organizations
12 to support activities including the construc-
13 tion, establishment, and operation of
14 schools for married girls and girls' orphan-
15 ages, vocational training and human rights
16 education for women and girls, health care
17 clinics for women and children, programs
18 to strengthen Afghan women-led organiza-
19 tions and women's leadership, and to pro-
20 vide monthly financial assistance to wid-
21 ows, orphans, and women head of house-
22 holds.”.

23 **SEC. 5. SENSE OF CONGRESS ON ASSISTANCE.**

24 It is the sense of Congress that, in providing assist-
25 ance under section 103(a)(7) of the Afghanistan Freedom

1 Support Act of 2002 (22 U.S.C. 7513(a)(7)), as amended
2 by section 4, the President should—

3 (1) condition the provision of such assistance on
4 the recipient adhering to international standards for
5 women’s rights and human rights; and

6 (2) ensure that Afghan women-led nongovern-
7 mental organizations throughout Afghanistan receive
8 grants without ethnic, religious, or any other dis-
9 crimination.

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