

113TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 3398

To authorize the Secretary of State and the Administrator of the United States Agency for International Development to provide assistance to support the rights of women and girls in developing countries, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

OCTOBER 30, 2013

Mr. CHABOT (for himself, Mr. SMITH of New Jersey, and Ms. MCCOLLUM) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Affairs

A BILL

To authorize the Secretary of State and the Administrator of the United States Agency for International Development to provide assistance to support the rights of women and girls in developing countries, 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 “Girls Count Act of
5 2013”.

6 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

7 Congress makes the following findings:

1 (1) According to the United States Census Bu-
2 reau’s 2013 international figures, 1 person in 12—
3 or close to 900,000,000 people—is a girl or young
4 woman age 10 through 24.

5 (2) The data also asserts that young people are
6 the fastest growing segment of the population in de-
7 veloping countries.

8 (3) Even though most countries do have birth
9 registration laws, every year 51,000,000 children
10 under 5 are not registered at birth, most of whom
11 are girls.

12 (4) A nationally recognized proof of birth is the
13 key to determining a child’s citizenship, nationality,
14 place of birth, parentage and age, without which a
15 passport, drivers license, or national identification
16 card are impossible to obtain. The lack of such docu-
17 mentation prevents girls and women from officially
18 participating in and benefitting from the formal eco-
19 nomic, legal, and political sectors in their countries.

20 (5) Without the ability to gain employment and
21 identification necessary to participate officially in
22 these sectors, women and girls are confined to the
23 home and left unpaid and often-invisible members of
24 society.

1 (6) Girls undertake much of the domestic labor
2 needed for poor families to survive: carrying water,
3 harvesting crops, tending livestock, caring for young-
4 er children, and doing chores.

5 (7) Accurate assessments of access to edu-
6 cation, poverty levels, and overall census activities
7 are hampered by the lack of official information on
8 women and girls. Without this rudimentary informa-
9 tion, assessments of foreign assistance and domestic
10 social welfare programs cannot be accurately
11 gauged.

12 (8) To ensure that women and girls are fully in-
13 tegrated into United States foreign assistance poli-
14 cies and programs, that the specific needs of girls
15 are, to the maximum extent possible, addressed in
16 the design, implementation, and evaluation of devel-
17 opment assistance programs, and that women and
18 girls have the power to effect the decisions that af-
19 fect their lives, all girls should be counted and have
20 access to birth certificates and other official docu-
21 mentation.

22 **SEC. 3. STATEMENT OF POLICY.**

23 It is the policy of the United States to—

24 (1) encourage countries to uphold the Universal
25 Declaration of Human Rights and enact laws that

1 ensure girls and boys of all ages are full participants
2 in society, including requiring birth certifications
3 and some type of national identity card to ensure
4 that all citizens, including girls, are counted;

5 (2) enhance training and capacity-building to
6 developing countries, local nongovernmental organi-
7 zations, and other civil society organizations to effec-
8 tively address the needs of birth registries in coun-
9 tries where girls are undercounted;

10 (3) include organizations representing children
11 and families in the design, implementation, and
12 monitoring of programs under this Act; and

13 (4) mainstream into the design, implementa-
14 tion, and evaluation of policies and programs at all
15 levels an understanding of the distinctive impact
16 that such policies and programs may have on girls.

17 **SEC. 4. UNITED STATES ASSISTANCE TO SUPPORT COUNT-**
18 **ING OF GIRLS IN THE DEVELOPING WORLD.**

19 (a) **AUTHORIZATION.**—The Secretary and the Admin-
20 istrator are authorized to—

21 (1) support programs that will contribute to im-
22 proved and sustainable Civil Registration and Vital
23 Statistics Systems (CRVS) with a focus on birth
24 registration as the first and most important life
25 event to be registered;

1 (2) promote programs that build the capacity of
2 developing countries' national and local legal and
3 policy frameworks to prevent discrimination against
4 girls;

5 (3) support programs to help increase property
6 rights, social security, and home ownership, land
7 tenure security, and inheritance rights for women;

8 (4) assist key ministries in the governments of
9 developing countries, including health, interior,
10 youth, and education ministries, to ensure that girls
11 from poor households obtain equitable access to so-
12 cial programs.

13 (b) COORDINATION WITH MULTILATERAL ORGANI-
14 ZATIONS.—The Secretary shall coordinate with the World
15 Bank, relevant United Nations agencies and programs,
16 and other relevant organizations to urge and work with
17 countries to enact, implement, and enforce laws that spe-
18 cifically collect data on girls and establish registration and
19 identification laws to ensure girls are active participants
20 in the social, economic, legal and political sectors of society
21 in their countries.

22 (c) COORDINATION WITH PRIVATE SECTOR AND
23 CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATIONS.—The Secretary and the
24 Administrator should work with United States, inter-
25 national, and local private sector and civil society organi-

1 zations to advocate for the registration and documentation
2 of all girls and boys in developing countries to prevent ex-
3 ploitation, violence, and other abuses.

4 **SEC. 5. REPORT.**

5 The Secretary and the Administrator shall include in
6 all relevant congressionally mandated reports and docu-
7 ments the following information:

8 (1) United States foreign assistance and devel-
9 opment assistance beneficiaries by age, gender, and
10 to the extent possible, marital status, location, and
11 school enrollment status in all programs and sectors.

12 (2) A description of how United States foreign
13 assistance and development assistance benefits girls.

14 (3) All information on programs that address
15 the particular needs of girls.

16 **SEC. 6. DEFINITIONS.**

17 In this Act:

18 (1) ADMINISTRATOR.—The term “Adminis-
19 trator” means the Administrator of the United
20 States Agency for International Development.

21 (2) DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE.—The term
22 “development assistance” means—

23 (A) assistance under—

24 (i) chapter 1 of part 1 of the Foreign
25 Assistance Act of 1961;

1 (ii) the Millennium Challenge Act of
2 2003 (22 U.S.C. 7701 et seq.);

3 (iii) the United States Leadership
4 Against HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Ma-
5 laria Act of 2003 (22 U.S.C. 7601 et seq.);

6 (iv) title V of the International Secu-
7 rity and Development Cooperation Act of
8 1980 (22 U.S.C. 290h et seq.; relating to
9 the African Development Foundation); or

10 (v) section 401 of the Foreign Assist-
11 ance Act of 1969 (22 U.S.C. 290f; relating
12 to the Inter-American Foundation);

13 (B) official development assistance under
14 any provision of law; and

15 (C) reconstruction assistance under any
16 provision of law.

17 (3) FOREIGN ASSISTANCE.—The term “foreign
18 assistance” means any tangible or intangible item
19 provided by the United States Government to a for-
20 eign country or international organization under the
21 Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 (22 U.S.C. 2151 et
22 seq.) or any other Act, including any training, serv-
23 ice, or technical advice, any item of real, personal,
24 or mixed property, any agricultural commodity, any
25 gift, loan, sale, credit, guarantee, or export subsidy,

1 United States dollars, and any currencies of any for-
2 eign country which are owned by the United States
3 Government.

4 (4) SECRETARY.—The term “Secretary” means
5 the Secretary of State.

6 **SEC. 7. SUNSET.**

7 This Act shall expire on the date that is 5 years after
8 the date of the enactment of this Act.

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