

113TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

S. 2591

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 SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

JULY 10, 2014

Mr. RUBIO (for himself and Mrs. SHAHEEN) introduced the following bill;
which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations

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 2014”.

6 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

7 Congress makes the following findings:

1 (1) According to the United States Census Bu-
2 reau’s 2014 international figures, 1 person in 8—or
3 12 percent of the total population of the world—is
4 a girl or young woman age 10 through 24.

5 (2) The Census Bureau’s data also asserts that
6 young people are the fastest growing segment of the
7 population in developing countries.

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

12 (4) A nationally recognized proof of birth sys-
13 tem is the key to determining a child’s citizenship,
14 nationality, place of birth, parentage, and age. With-
15 out such a system, a passport, drivers license, or na-
16 tional identification card is extremely difficult to ob-
17 tain. The lack of such documentation prevents girls
18 and women from officially participating in and bene-
19 fitting from the formal economic, legal, and political
20 sectors in their countries.

21 (5) Without the ability to gain employment and
22 identification necessary to officially participate in
23 these sectors, women and girls are confined to the
24 home and remain unpaid and often-invisible mem-
25 bers of 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 in
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) incorporate into the design, implementation,
14 and evaluation of policies and programs at all levels
15 an understanding of the distinctive impact that such
16 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, home ownership, land tenure
 7 security, and inheritance rights for women; and

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 and the Administrator shall co-
 15 ordinate with the World Bank, relevant United Nations
 16 agencies and programs, and other relevant organizations
 17 to urge and work with countries to enact, implement, and
 18 enforce laws that specifically collect data on girls and es-
 19 tablish registration and identification laws to ensure girls
 20 are active participants in the social, economic, legal and
 21 political sectors of society 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) To the extent possible, United States for-
9 eign assistance and development assistance bene-
10 ficiaries by age, gender, 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) Information on programs that address the
15 particular needs of girls.

16 **SEC. 6. OFFSET.**

17 Of the amounts authorized to be appropriated for
18 United States foreign assistance programs of a Federal
19 department or agency that administers such programs for
20 a fiscal year, up to 5 percent of such amounts are author-
21 ized to be appropriated to carry out this Act for such fiscal
22 year.

23 **SEC. 7. DEFINITIONS.**

24 In this Act:

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

4 (2) DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE.—The term
5 “development assistance” means—

6 (A) assistance under—

7 (i) chapter 1 of part 1 of the Foreign
8 Assistance Act of 1961 (22 U.S.C. 2151 et
9 seq.);

10 (ii) the Millennium Challenge Act of
11 2003 (22 U.S.C. 7701 et seq.);

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

15 (iv) title V of the International Secu-
16 rity and Development Cooperation Act of
17 1980 (22 U.S.C. 290h et seq.; relating to
18 the African Development Foundation); and

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

22 (B) official development assistance under
23 any provision of law; and

24 (C) reconstruction assistance under any
25 provision of law.

1 (3) FOREIGN ASSISTANCE.—The term “foreign
2 assistance” means any tangible or intangible item
3 provided by the United States Government to a for-
4 eign country or international organization under the
5 Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 (22 U.S.C. 2151 et
6 seq.) or any other Act, including any training, serv-
7 ice, or technical advice, any item of real, personal,
8 or mixed property, any agricultural commodity, any
9 gift, loan, sale, credit, guarantee, or export subsidy,
10 United States dollars, and any currencies of any for-
11 eign country which are owned by the United States
12 Government.

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

15 **SEC. 8. SUNSET.**

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

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