

115TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 2408

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

OCTOBER 4, 2017

Received; read twice and referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations

AN ACT

To enhance the transparency, improve the coordination, and intensify the impact of assistance to support access to primary and secondary education for displaced children and persons, including women and girls, 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,*

1 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

2 This Act may be cited as the “Protecting Girls’ Ac-
3 cess to Education in Vulnerable Settings Act” or the
4 “Protecting Girls’ Access to Education Act”.

5 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

6 Congress finds the following:

7 (1) At the start of 2017, more than 65 million
8 people have been displaced by disasters and conflicts
9 around the world, the highest number recorded since
10 the end of World War II, of which more than 21
11 million people are refugees.

12 (2) More than half of the population of dis-
13 placed people are children and, according to the
14 United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees,
15 nearly 4 million school-aged displaced children lack
16 access to primary education.

17 (3) Education offers socioeconomic opportuni-
18 ties, psychological stability, and physical protection
19 for displaced people, particularly for women and
20 girls, who might otherwise be vulnerable to severe
21 forms of trafficking in persons (as such term is de-
22 fined in section 103(9) of the Trafficking Victims
23 Protection Act of 2000 (22 U.S.C. 7103(9))), child
24 marriage, sexual exploitation, or economic disenfran-
25 chisement, and contributes to long-term recovery

1 and economic opportunities for displaced people and
2 for the communities hosting them.

3 (4) Displaced children face considerable bar-
4 riers to accessing educational services and, because
5 the duration of such displacement is, on average, 20
6 years, such children may spend the entirety of their
7 childhood without access to such services.

8 (5) Despite the rising need for such services,
9 less than 2 percent of global emergency aid was di-
10 rected toward educational services in 2016.

11 **SEC. 3. SENSE OF CONGRESS.**

12 It is the sense of Congress that—

13 (1) it is critical to ensure that children, particu-
14 larly girls, displaced by conflicts overseas are able to
15 access educational services because such access can
16 combat extremism and reduce exploitation and pov-
17 erty; and

18 (2) the educational needs of vulnerable women
19 and girls should be considered in the design, imple-
20 mentation, and evaluation of related United States
21 foreign assistance policies and programs.

22 **SEC. 4. STATEMENT OF POLICY.**

23 It is the policy of the United States to—

24 (1) partner with and encourage other countries,
25 public and private multilateral institutions, and non-

1 governmental and civil society organizations, includ-
2 ing faith-based organizations and organizations rep-
3 resenting parents and children, to support efforts to
4 ensure that displaced children have access to safe
5 primary and secondary education;

6 (2) work with donors to enhance training and
7 capacity-building for the governments of countries
8 hosting significant numbers of displaced people to
9 design, implement, and monitor programs to effec-
10 tively address barriers to such education;

11 (3) incorporate into the design and implementa-
12 tion of such programs measures to evaluate the im-
13 pact of the programs on girls, with respect to the re-
14 duction of child marriage, gender-based violence, and
15 severe forms of trafficking in persons (as such term
16 is defined in section 103(9) of the Trafficking Vic-
17 tims Protection Act of 2000 (22 U.S.C. 7103(9)));
18 and

19 (4) coordinate with the governments of coun-
20 tries hosting significant numbers of displaced people
21 to—

22 (A) promote the inclusion of displaced chil-
23 dren into the educational systems of such coun-
24 tries; and

(B) develop innovative approaches to providing safe primary and secondary educational opportunities in circumstances in which such inclusion is not possible or appropriate, such as schools that permit more children to be educated by extending the hours of schooling and expanding the number of teachers.

SEC. 5. UNITED STATES ASSISTANCE TO SUPPORT EDUCATIONAL SERVICES FOR DISPLACED CHILDREN.

(a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of State and the Administrator of the United States Agency for International Development are authorized to prioritize and advance ongoing efforts to support programs that—

(1) provide safe primary and secondary education for displaced children;

(2) build the capacity of institutions in countries hosting displaced people to prevent discrimination against displaced children, especially displaced girls, who seek access to such education; and

(3) help increase the access of displaced children, especially displaced girls, to educational, economic, and entrepreneurial opportunities, including through the governmental authorities responsible for educational or youth services in such host countries.

1 (b) COORDINATION WITH MULTILATERAL ORGANI-
2 ZATIONS.—The Secretary and the Administrator are au-
3 thorized to coordinate with the World Bank, appropriate
4 agencies of the United Nations, and other relevant multi-
5 lateral organizations to work with governments in other
6 countries to collect relevant data, disaggregated by age
7 and gender, on the ability of displaced people to access
8 education and participate in economic activity, in order
9 to improve the targeting, monitoring, and evaluation of re-
10 lated assistance efforts.

11 (c) COORDINATION WITH PRIVATE SECTOR AND
12 CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATIONS.—The Secretary and the
13 Administrator are authorized to work with private sector
14 and civil society organizations to promote safe primary
15 and secondary education for displaced children.

16 **SEC. 6. REPORT.**

17 During the 5-year period beginning on the date of
18 the enactment of this Act, the Secretary and the Adminis-
19 trator shall include in any report or evaluation submitted
20 to Congress relating to a foreign assistance program for
21 natural or manmade disaster relief or response the fol-
22 lowing information (to the extent practicable and appro-
23 priate):

1 (1) A breakdown of the beneficiaries of such
2 program by location, age, gender, marital status,
3 and school enrollment status.

4 (2) A description of how such program benefits
5 displaced people.

6 (3) A description of any primary or secondary
7 educational services supported by such program that
8 specifically address the needs of displaced girls.

Passed the House of Representatives October 3,
2017.

Attest:

KAREN L. HAAS,

Clerk.