

116TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 237

To direct the Secretary of State to develop a strategy to regain observer status for Taiwan in the World Health Organization, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

JANUARY 3, 2019

Mr. YOHO (for himself, Mr. ENGEL, and Mr. McCAUL) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Affairs

A BILL

To direct the Secretary of State to develop a strategy to regain observer status for Taiwan in the World Health Organization, 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. PARTICIPATION OF TAIWAN IN THE WORLD**
4 **HEALTH ORGANIZATION.**

5 (a) FINDINGS.—Congress makes the following find-
6 ings:

7 (1) The World Health Organization (WHO) is
8 a specialized agency of the United Nations, charged
9 with coordinating health efforts within the United
10 Nations system. The World Health Assembly

1 (WHA) is the decision-making body of the WHO,
2 which convenes annually in May to set the policies
3 and priorities of the organization. Statehood is not
4 a requirement for attendance at the WHA, and nu-
5 merous observers, including non-members and non-
6 governmental organizations, attended the most re-
7 cent WHA in May 2017.

8 (2) Taiwan began seeking to participate in the
9 WHO as an observer in 1997. In 2009, with strong
10 support from successive United States Administra-
11 tions, Congress, and like-minded WHO Member
12 States, and during a period of improved Cross-Strait
13 relations, Taiwan received an invitation to attend
14 the WHA as an observer under the name “Chinese
15 Taipei”. Taiwan received the same invitation each
16 year until 2016, when following the election of Presi-
17 dent Tsai-Ing Wen of the Democratic Progressive
18 Party, Taiwan’s engagement in the international
19 community began facing increased resistance from
20 the People’s Republic of China (PRC). Taiwan’s in-
21 vitation to the 2016 WHA was received late and in-
22 cluded new language conditioning Taiwan’s partici-
23 pation on the PRC’s “one China principle”. In 2017,
24 Taiwan did not receive an invitation to the WHA.

1 (3) Taiwan remains a model contributor to
2 world health, having provided financial and technical
3 assistance to respond to numerous global health
4 challenges. Taiwan has invested over \$6 billion in
5 international medical and humanitarian aid efforts
6 impacting over 80 countries since 1996. In 2014,
7 Taiwan responded to the Ebola crisis by donating \$1
8 million and providing 100,000 sets of personal pro-
9 tective equipment. Through the Global Cooperation
10 and Training Framework, the United States and
11 Taiwan have jointly conducted training programs for
12 experts to combat MERS, Dengue Fever, and Zika.
13 These diseases know no borders, and Taiwan's need-
14 less exclusion from global health cooperation in-
15 creases the dangers presented by global pandemics.

16 (4) Taiwan's international engagement has
17 faced increased resistance from the PRC. Taiwan
18 was not invited to the 2016 Assembly of the Inter-
19 national Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), despite
20 participating as a guest at the organization's prior
21 summit in 2013. Taiwan's request to participate in
22 the 2016 General Assembly of the International
23 Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL) was also
24 rejected. In May 2017, PRC delegates disrupted a
25 meeting of the Kimberley Process on conflict dia-

1 monds held in Perth, Australia, until delegates from
2 Taiwan were asked to leave. In June 2017, the Re-
3 public of Panama granted diplomatic recognition to
4 the PRC, terminating a longstanding diplomatic re-
5 lationship with Taiwan.

6 (5) Congress has established a policy of support
7 for Taiwan’s participation in international bodies
8 that address shared transnational challenges, par-
9 ticularly in the WHO. Congress passed H.R. 1794
10 in the 106th Congress, H.R. 428 in the 107th Con-
11 gress, and S. 2092 in the 108th Congress to direct
12 the Secretary of State to establish a strategy for,
13 and to report annually to Congress on, efforts to ob-
14 tain observer status for Taiwan at the WHA. Con-
15 gress also passed H.R. 1151 in the 113th Congress,
16 directing the Secretary to report on a strategy to
17 gain observer status for Taiwan at the ICAO Assem-
18 bly, and H.R. 1853 in the 114th Congress, directing
19 the Secretary to report on a strategy to gain ob-
20 server status for Taiwan at the INTERPOL Assem-
21 bly. However, in 2016 Taiwan did not receive invita-
22 tions to attend any of these events as an observer.

23 (b) AUGMENTATION OF REPORT CONCERNING THE
24 PARTICIPATION OF TAIWAN IN THE WORLD HEALTH OR-
25 GANIZATION.—

1 (1) IN GENERAL.—Subsection (c) of section 1
2 of Public Law 108–235 (118 Stat. 656) is amended
3 by adding at the end the following new paragraph:

4 “(3) An account of the changes and improve-
5 ments the Secretary of State has made to the
6 United States plan to endorse and obtain observer
7 status for Taiwan at the World Health Assembly,
8 following any annual meetings of the World Health
9 Assembly at which Taiwan did not obtain observer
10 status.”.

11 (2) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendment made
12 by paragraph (1) shall take effect and apply begin-
13 ning with the first report required under subsection
14 (c) of section 1 of Public Law 108–235 that is sub-
15 mitted after the date of the enactment of this Act.

○