

116TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 353

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 8, 2019

Mr. YOHO (for himself, Mr. McCAUL, and Mr. ENGEL) 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

(WHA) is the decision-making body of the WHO, which convenes annually in May to set the policies and priorities of the organization. Statehood is not a requirement for attendance at the WHA, and numerous observers, including non-members and non-governmental organizations, attended the most recent WHA in May 2018.

(2) Taiwan began seeking to participate in the WHO as an observer in 1997. In 2009, with strong support from successive United States Administrations, Congress, and like-minded WHO Member States, and during a period of improved Cross-Strait relations, Taiwan received an invitation to attend the WHA as an observer under the name “Chinese Taipei”. Taiwan received the same invitation each year until 2016, when following the election of President Tsai-Ing Wen of the Democratic Progressive Party, Taiwan’s engagement in the international community began facing increased resistance from the People’s Republic of China (PRC). Taiwan’s invitation to the 2016 WHA was received late and included new language conditioning Taiwan’s participation on the PRC’s “one China principle”. In 2017 and 2018, 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 requests to participate in
22 the General Assembly of the International Criminal
23 Police Organization (INTERPOL) have also been
24 rejected. In May 2017, PRC delegates disrupted a
25 meeting of the Kimberley Process on conflict dia-

monds held in Perth, Australia, until delegates from Taiwan were asked to leave. Since 2016, the Democratic Republic of São Tomé and Príncipe, the Republic of Panama, the Dominican Republic, Burkina Faso, and the Republic of El Salvador have terminated longstanding diplomatic relationships with Taiwan and granted diplomatic recognition to the PRC.

(5) Congress has established a policy of support for Taiwan's participation in international bodies that address shared transnational challenges, particularly in the WHO. Congress passed H.R. 1794 in the 106th Congress, H.R. 428 in the 107th Congress, and S. 2092 in the 108th Congress to direct the Secretary of State to establish a strategy for, and to report annually to Congress on, efforts to obtain observer status for Taiwan at the WHA. Congress also passed H.R. 1151 in the 113th Congress, directing the Secretary to report on a strategy to gain observer status for Taiwan at the ICAO Assembly, and H.R. 1853 in the 114th Congress, directing the Secretary to report on a strategy to gain observer status for Taiwan at the INTERPOL Assembly. However, since 2016 Taiwan has not received

1 an invitation to attend any of these events as an ob-
2 server.

3 (b) AUGMENTATION OF REPORT CONCERNING THE
4 PARTICIPATION OF TAIWAN IN THE WORLD HEALTH OR-
5 GANIZATION.—

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

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

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

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