

116TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 753

To promote international exchanges on best election practices, cultivate more secure democratic institutions around the world, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

JANUARY 24, 2019

Mr. CASTRO of Texas (for himself and Mr. MEADOWS) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Affairs

A BILL

To promote international exchanges on best election practices, cultivate more secure democratic institutions around the world, 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 “Global Electoral Ex-
5 change Act of 2019”.

6 **SEC. 2. SENSE OF CONGRESS.**

7 It is the sense of Congress that—

8 (1) recent elections globally have illustrated the
9 urgent need for the promotion and exchange of
10 international best election practices, particularly in

1 the areas of cybersecurity, results transmission,
2 transparency of electoral data, election dispute reso-
3 lution, and the elimination of discriminatory reg-
4 istration practices and other electoral irregularities;

5 (2) the advancement of democracy worldwide
6 promotes American interests, as stable democracies
7 provide new market opportunities, improve global
8 health outcomes, and promote economic freedom and
9 regional security;

10 (3) credible elections are the cornerstone of a
11 healthy democracy and enable all persons to exercise
12 their basic human right to have a say in how they
13 are governed;

14 (4) inclusive elections strengthen the credibility
15 and stability of democracies more broadly;

16 (5) at the heart of a strong election cycle is the
17 professionalism of the election management body
18 and an empowered civil society;

19 (6) the development of local expertise via peer-
20 to-peer learning and exchanges promotes the inde-
21 pendence of such bodies from internal and external
22 influence; and

23 (7) supporting the efforts of peoples in democ-
24 ratizing societies to build more representative gov-

1 ernments in their respective countries is in the na-
2 tional interest of the United States.

3 **SEC. 3. GLOBAL ELECTORAL EXCHANGE.**

4 (a) GLOBAL ELECTORAL EXCHANGE.—The Sec-
5 retary of State is authorized to establish and administer
6 a Global Electoral Exchange Program to promote the utili-
7 zation of sound election administration practices around
8 the world.

9 (b) PURPOSE.—The purpose of the Global Electoral
10 Exchange Program described in subsection (a) shall in-
11 clude the promotion and exchange of international best
12 election practices, including in the areas of—

- 13 (1) cybersecurity;
- 14 (2) results transmission;
- 15 (3) transparency of electoral data;
- 16 (4) election dispute resolution;
- 17 (5) the elimination of discriminatory registra-
18 tion practices and electoral irregularities;
- 19 (6) equitable access to polling places, voter edu-
20 cation information, and voting mechanisms (includ-
21 ing by persons with disabilities); and
- 22 (7) other sound election administration prac-
23 tices.

24 (c) EXCHANGE OF ELECTORAL AUTHORITIES.—

1 (1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of State may,
2 in consultation, as appropriate, with the United
3 States Agency for International Development, make
4 grants to any United States-based organization de-
5 scribed in section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue
6 Code of 1986 and exempt from tax under section
7 501(a) of such Code with experience in and a pri-
8 mary focus on foreign comparative election systems
9 or subject matter expertise in the administration or
10 integrity of such systems that submits an application
11 in such form, and satisfying such requirements, as
12 the Secretary may require.

13 (2) TYPES OF GRANTS.—An organization de-
14 scribed in paragraph (1) may receive a grant for one
15 or more of the following purposes:

16 (A) To design and implement programs
17 bringing election administrators and officials,
18 including government officials, poll workers,
19 civil society representatives, members of the ju-
20 diary, and others who participate in the orga-
21 nization and administration of public elections
22 in a foreign country that faces challenges to its
23 electoral process to the United States to study
24 election procedures in the United States for
25 educational purposes.

1 (B) To design and implement programs
2 taking the United States or another country's
3 election administrators and officials, including
4 government officials, poll workers, civil society
5 representatives, members of the judiciary, and
6 others who participate in the organization and
7 administration of public elections to study and
8 discuss election procedures for educational pur-
9 poses.

10 (3) LIMITS ON ACTIVITIES.—Activities adminis-
11 tered under the Global Electoral Exchange Program
12 may not—

13 (A) include observation of an election for
14 the purposes of assessing the validity or legit-
15 imacy of that election;

16 (B) facilitate any advocacy for a certain
17 electoral result by a grantee when participating
18 in the Program; or

19 (C) be carried out without proper consulta-
20 tion with State and local authorities in the
21 United States that administer elections.

22 (4) SENSE OF CONGRESS.—It is the sense of
23 Congress that the Secretary of State should estab-
24 lish and maintain a network of Global Electoral Ex-
25 change Program alumni, to promote communication

1 and further exchange of information regarding
2 sound election administration practices among cur-
3 rent and former program participants.

4 (5) FURTHER LIMITS.—A recipient of a grant
5 under the Global Electoral Exchange Program may
6 use such grant for only the purpose for which such
7 grant was awarded, unless otherwise authorized by
8 the Secretary of State.

9 (6) NOT DUPLICATIVE.—Grants made under
10 this subsection may not be duplicative of any other
11 grants made under any other provision of law for
12 similar or related purposes.

13 **SEC. 4. CONGRESSIONAL OVERSIGHT.**

14 Not later than one year after the date of the enact-
15 ment of this Act and in each of the following two years
16 thereafter, the Secretary of State shall provide to the
17 Committee on Foreign Affairs of the House of Representa-
18 tives and the Committee on Foreign Relations of the Sen-
19 ate a briefing on the status of any activities carried out
20 pursuant to this Act during the preceding year, which
21 shall include, among other information, the following:

22 (1) A summary of all exchanges conducted
23 under the Global Electoral Exchange Program, in-
24 cluding information regarding grantees, participants,
25 and the locations where program activities were held.

1 (2) A description of the criteria used to select
2 grantees under the Global Electoral Exchange Pro-
3 gram.

4 (3) Any recommendations for the improvement
5 of the Global Electoral Exchange Program, based on
6 the purpose specified in section 3(b).

7 **SEC. 5. NO ADDITIONAL FUNDS AUTHORIZED.**

8 No additional funds are authorized to be appro-
9 priated to carry out the requirements of this Act. Such
10 requirements shall be carried out using amounts otherwise
11 authorized to be appropriated.

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