

116TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

H. R. 7673

To ensure the United States diplomatic workforce at all levels reflects the diverse composition of the United States.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

JULY 20, 2020

Ms. BASS (for herself, Mr. MEEKS, Ms. LEE of California, Mr. SIRES, Ms. JUDY CHU of California, Mr. CASTRO of Texas, Mr. EVANS, Ms. JAYAPAL, Ms. HAALAND, Mrs. HAYES, and Ms. OMAR) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Affairs

A BILL

To ensure the United States diplomatic workforce at all levels reflects the diverse composition of the United States.

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 “Represent America
5 Abroad Act of 2020”.

6 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

7 Congress finds the following:

8 (1) As the United States becomes more racially
9 and ethnically diverse, the Department of State

1 must continue to invest in policies to recruit, retain,
2 and develop the best and brightest from the full
3 spectrum of American society in order to be better
4 positioned to advance United States interests
5 abroad.

6 (2) Foreign Service officers are America's face
7 to the world. Thus, the workforce must represent the
8 United States commitment to inclusion and diversity
9 in order to effectively advance American values on
10 the world stage.

11 (3) The Department of State must embrace
12 policies that recruit professionals from the broadest
13 possible pool of talent and retain them in order to
14 significantly increase diversity in the Foreign Serv-
15 ice. Timely action to increase diversity at the mid-
16 levels is crucial, as it takes approximately nine years
17 for an entry level Foreign Service officer (class 6, 5,
18 4) to rise to the mid-ranks of the Foreign Service
19 (class 3, 2, or 1).

20 (4) A February 2020 report by the Government
21 Accountability Office found barriers to a diverse and
22 inclusive workforce at the Department of State, es-
23 pecially at the mid-career and senior levels. Individ-
24 uals who are racial or ethnic minorities comprise
25 only 24 percent of Foreign Service officers as a

1 whole. At the executive level, individuals who are ra-
2 cial or ethnic minorities comprise only 13 percent.
3 This means that the leadership is the least diverse
4 level within the Foreign Service.

5 (5) In the past, the Department of State has
6 acknowledged its lack of workforce diversity and
7 pledged to take concrete steps to address the prob-
8 lem. In 2017, then-Secretary of State Rex Tillerson
9 recognized a great diversity gap in the Department
10 of State and former Secretary of State John Kerry
11 noted that in order to represent the United States,
12 the Department of State must have a workforce that
13 reflects the rich composition of its citizenry. Yet
14 there has been no concrete plan to address the lack
15 of diversity at the mid-career and senior levels.

16 **SEC. 3. DECLARATION OF NATIONAL INTEREST; STATE-**
17 **MENT OF POLICY.**

18 (a) DECLARATION OF NATIONAL INTEREST.—Con-
19 gress declares that it is in the national interest of the
20 United States to ensure that the members of the United
21 States Foreign Service workforce be representative of the
22 American people.

23 (b) STATEMENT OF POLICY.—It shall be the policy
24 of the Department of State—

1 (1) to strengthen the Foreign Service workforce
2 by bolstering the diversity of those who represent
3 Americans abroad;

4 (2) to treat the people of the Foreign Service
5 as its primary asset, and as such, hold as a central
6 tenet making strides in increasing minority represen-
7 tation at all levels of the Foreign Service workforce
8 to secure the country’s national interests; and

9 (3) in accordance with the Foreign Service Act
10 of 1980, to attract highly qualified, mid-career pro-
11 fessionals who are also American minorities, through
12 a pathway program for entry into the Foreign Serv-
13 ice.

14 **SEC. 4. AUTHORIZATION.**

15 (a) **IN GENERAL.**—Not later than 180 days after the
16 date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of State
17 shall establish a program, which shall be known as the
18 “Represent America Mid-Career Foreign Service Entry
19 Program” (in this section referred to as the “Program”),
20 to be administered jointly by the Director General of the
21 Foreign Service and the Director of Global Talent Man-
22 agement, to identify, attract, and welcome mid-career pro-
23 fessionals who are from minority groups into the Foreign
24 Service.

25 (b) **ELEMENTS OF PROGRAM.**—

1 (1) PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS.—The Secretary
2 of State shall carry out the following with respect to
3 the Program:

4 (A) Establish and publish on the Depart-
5 ment’s website eligibility criteria for candidates
6 to participate in the program.

7 (B) Carry out countrywide recruitment ef-
8 forts to attract highly qualified, mid-career pro-
9 fessionals from minority groups, such as the
10 following:

11 (i) Community agencies and organiza-
12 tions.

13 (ii) Faith-based organizations.

14 (iii) Community events.

15 (iv) Professional associations.

16 (v) Colleges and universities, including
17 historically Black colleges and universities
18 and other minority-serving institutions
19 such as Hispanic-serving institutions,
20 Asian American and Native American Pa-
21 cific Islander-serving institutions, Amer-
22 ican Indian Tribally controlled colleges and
23 universities, Alaska Native and Native Ha-
24 waiian-serving institutions, Tribal colleges
25 and universities, Predominantly Black In-

1 stitutions, and Native American-serving,
2 Nontribal institutions.

3 (vi) Diplomats in residence.

4 (vii) Job fairs.

5 (viii) Newspaper/magazines/journals.

6 (ix) Radio stations and programs.

7 (x) Websites, webcasts, podcasts, and
8 other online channels.

9 (C) Recruit eligible candidates for the Pro-
10 gram.

11 (D) Develop a structured program that in-
12 cludes as part of the initial training, a class or
13 module that specifically prepares participants
14 for life in the Foreign Service, including con-
15 veying to such participants essential elements of
16 the practical knowledge that is normally ac-
17 quired during a Foreign Service Officer's initial
18 assignments.

19 (E) Include appropriate mentorship and
20 other career development opportunities, such as
21 leadership training, for Program participants.

22 (2) OVERALL QUALIFICATIONS.—In recruiting,
23 training, and assigning members of the Program,
24 the Secretary of State should seek highly qualified

1 minority individuals who are mid-career profes-
2 sionals—

3 (A) with diverse work experience who have
4 capabilities, insights, techniques, and experi-
5 ences that would serve to enrich the Foreign
6 Service workforce and empower it to perform
7 more effectively;

8 (B) with demonstrated knowledge of, expe-
9 rience with, and interest in United States for-
10 eign policy and national security and inter-
11 national affairs, including knowledge of the af-
12 fairs, cultures, and languages of other coun-
13 tries;

14 (C) with demonstrable leadership skills and
15 the potential for further growth;

16 (D) that demonstrate a track record of col-
17 laboration, team-building, and stakeholder man-
18 agement skills;

19 (E) with demonstrated capacity for critical
20 thinking and analytical skills, including the
21 ability to synthesize information into clear and
22 concise recommendations;

23 (F) with strategic thinking, and ability to
24 solve complex problems;

1 (G) with flexibility, adaptability, and deter-
2 mination; and

3 (H) who are United States citizens with
4 worldwide service availability and who are able
5 to obtain appropriate security and medical
6 clearances.

7 (c) ADVANCEMENT FROM PROGRAM.—Candidates
8 who are accepted into the Program in accordance with the
9 qualifications and requirements of this section shall have
10 the opportunity to advance to the Foreign Service oral as-
11 sessment for potential entry as the appropriate class of
12 mid-level Foreign Service officer in accordance with the
13 candidate’s professional qualifications.

14 (d) MID-CAREER PROFESSIONAL DEFINED.—For
15 purposes of the Program, the term “mid-career profes-
16 sional” means an individual who has the skills and experi-
17 ence to serve as a mid-level Foreign Service officer (class
18 3, 2, or 1) and who meets any of the following criteria,
19 consistent with the merit-based principles and core pre-
20 cepts set forth in the Foreign Affairs Manual and Hand-
21 book and in accordance with applicable requirements of
22 the Foreign Service Act of 1980:

23 (1) An individual with 8+ years of professional
24 experience and a bachelor’s degree from an accred-
25 ited college or university in selected fields of study

1 representing the needs of the Department of State,
2 including public policy, public administration, inter-
3 national law, international relations, political science,
4 foreign languages, business administration, econom-
5 ics, history, sociology, geography, social or cultural
6 anthropology, statistics, or the humanities.

7 (2) An individual with 7+ years of professional
8 experience and a master's degree from an accredited
9 college or university in selected fields of study rep-
10 resenting the needs of the Department of State, in-
11 cluding any field listed in paragraph (1).

12 (3) An individual with 5+ years of professional
13 experience and doctoral degree from an accredited
14 college or university in selected fields of study rep-
15 resenting the needs of the Department of State, in-
16 cluding any field listed in paragraph (1).

17 **SEC. 5. REPORTS.**

18 (a) INITIAL REPORT.—Not later than 180 days after
19 the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary shall
20 submit to the Committee on Foreign Affairs of the House
21 of Representatives and the Committee on Foreign Rela-
22 tions of the Senate a report on a plan to establish the
23 Represent America Mid-Career Foreign Service Entry
24 Program.

1 (b) ANNUAL UPDATE.—Annually thereafter, the Sec-
2 retary shall submit to the Committee on Foreign Affairs
3 of the House of Representatives and the Committee on
4 Foreign Relations of the Senate a report on the status
5 of the Represent America Mid-Career Foreign Service
6 Entry Program. Each such report shall include the fol-
7 lowing information with respect to the previous year:

8 (1) The number of candidates approved for the
9 program.

10 (2) The number of candidates who began par-
11 ticipating, including anonymized information on such
12 candidates' backgrounds with respect to education
13 and prior work experience and grade level at which
14 the candidate entered the Foreign Service.

15 (3) A breakdown of the number of participants
16 recruited into and advancing from the program by
17 ethnicity and sex.

18 (4) A disaggregation by Foreign Service cone
19 and post (including identifying whether the post is
20 hard-to-fill) assigned to each participant advancing
21 from the program.

22 (5) Program attrition rates and retention data,
23 including information on how such data compares to
24 the data reported in the most recent prior submis-
25 sion of such report.

1 (6) Information on the Department's recruiting
2 efforts for the program, including an outreach strat-
3 egy detailing resources allocated to outreach, as well
4 as where, how, and when outreach will be carried
5 out.

6 (7) Information on the Department's efforts to
7 improve the efficacy of the program and promote re-
8 tention of program participants.

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