

□ 1615

REFUGEE SANITATION FACILITY
SAFETY ACT OF 2019

Mr. ENGEL. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 615) to provide women and girls safe access to sanitation facilities in refugee camps.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 615

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the “Refugee Sanitation Facility Safety Act of 2019”.

SEC. 2. SECURE ACCESS TO SANITATION FACILITIES FOR WOMEN AND GIRLS.

Section 501 of the Foreign Relations Act, Fiscal Years 1994 and 1995 (22 U.S.C. 2601 note) is amended in subsection (a)—

(1) by striking “and” at the end of paragraph (10);

(2) by striking the period at the end of paragraph (11) and inserting “; and”; and

(3) by adding at the end the following: “(12) the provision of safe and secure access to sanitation facilities, with a special emphasis on women and girls, and vulnerable populations.”.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from New York (Mr. ENGEL) and the gentleman from Texas (Mr. MCCAUL) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New York.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. ENGEL. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on H.R. 615, the Refugee Sanitation Facility Safety Act 2019.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from New York?

There was no objection.

Mr. ENGEL. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Madam Speaker, first of all, I want to thank Ms. MENG and Mr. ZELDIN for authoring this important bipartisan measure.

We are facing a devastating refugee crisis around the world right now. Over 25 million people are currently refugees having fled from violence, conflict, and crisis. Many of these people are now living in refugee camps.

And let me be clear, we need a foreign policy that addresses the root causes of this crisis.

So I am pleased we just considered my Global Fragility bill, which works to prevent the kind of conflict and instability that leads to these refugee crises.

The United States also needs to open its doors to more of these families who have fled violence in search of a better life. America should be leading the world to help in relocating these displaced people, so they can find new homes and start anew.

And we need to make sure that when people are living in refugee camps,

they are cared for and treated with dignity.

Sadly, far too many women and girls in these camps face danger right now. Bathrooms and shower facilities have often become dangerous places with predators taking advantage of poor lighting to stage attacks.

After facing the trauma of being driven from their homes, women and girls in refugee camps should not have to worry about being sexually assaulted, period.

We need to do what we can to make sure that refugee camps have safe, accessible sanitation facilities for everyone. So I am pleased that we are considering legislation today that works to do just that.

Madam Speaker, with H.R. 615, the State Department, when providing overseas assistance for refugees, will seek to ensure safe access to sanitation facilities, especially for those most vulnerable.

Madam Speaker, this is a good bipartisan bill. I am proud to support it, and I urge my colleagues to do the same.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. MCCAUL. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Madam Speaker, I rise in support of the Refugee Sanitation Facility Safety Act.

I want to commend my two colleagues from New York, Representatives MENG and ZELDIN, and also Chairman ENGEL for the good work on this bill.

Around the world, conflict and humanitarian disasters are causing unprecedented levels of displacement in places like South Sudan, Somalia, Syria, Nigeria, and Venezuela.

Some of these crises have dragged on for years and even decades. Generations of young people are growing up knowing only life in a refugee camp where conditions can be dire, and even dangerous, for women, children, and other vulnerable populations.

In these situations, things as basic as lights and locks can make a difference between safe restrooms and bathing facilities in dangerous environments where refugees are vulnerable to sexual violence and other crimes.

This bill amends the Foreign Relations Act to ensure support for safe sanitation facilities for refugees and displaced persons living in camps around the world.

The U.S. continues to be the largest donor to refugees and displaced persons around the world, and we will continue to lead, while encouraging other countries to step up and do more.

In closing, Madam Speaker, the United States is a leading donor of humanitarian assistance to refugees around the world. Through the work of UNHCR and NGO partners, we are saving millions of lives every day.

This bill does not increase those assistance levels but will help ensure that our funding is put to effective use

in protecting the safety and dignity of vulnerable refugees.

Madam Speaker, I want to, again, thank Chairman ENGEL and Representatives MENG and ZELDIN for their leadership, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. ENGEL. Madam Speaker, in closing, let me say that we are facing a refugee crisis around the world. Wars, violence, instability—millions of people have fled their homes in search of safety.

We need to do what we can to help these people find new homes and start anew. And while they are living in temporary refugee camps, we need to make sure they have the tools to stay safe and healthy.

The Refugee Sanitation Facility Safety Act of 2019 provides refugee women and girls with safe access to sanitation facilities.

This is one clear, straightforward way we can help those most vulnerable people. It is a good, commonsense bill; I am pleased to support it. And I thank Mr. MCCAUL as well for his support.

Madam Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from New York (Mr. ENGEL) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 615.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

DIGITAL GLOBAL ACCESS POLICY
ACT OF 2019

Mr. ENGEL. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 1359) to promote Internet access in developing countries and update foreign policy toward the Internet, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 1359

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the “Digital Global Access Policy Act of 2019” or the “Digital GAP Act”.

SEC. 2. PURPOSE.

The purpose of this Act is to—

(1) encourage the efforts of developing countries to improve and secure mobile and fixed access to the Internet in order to catalyze innovation, spur economic growth and job creation, improve health, education, and financial services, reduce poverty and gender inequality, mitigate disasters, and promote free speech, democracy, and good governance;

(2) promote build-once policies and approaches and the multi-stakeholder approach to Internet governance; and

(3) ensure the effective use of United States foreign assistance resources toward that end.

SEC. 3. FINDINGS.

Congress makes the following findings:

(1) Internet access has been a driver of economic activity around the world. Bringing Internet access to the more than 4,000,000,000 people who do not have it could increase global economic output by \$6,700,000,000 and raise 500,000,000 people out of poverty.

(2) The number of Internet users has more than tripled from 1,000,000,000 to over 3,000,000,000 since 2005, including 2,000,000,000 living in the developing world, yet more than half of the world's population remains offline, living without the economic and social benefits of the Internet. By the end of 2016, over 80 percent of households in the developed world had Internet access, compared with just 40 percent of households in developing countries and just 11 percent in the world's least developed countries. Of the world's offline population, an estimated 75 percent live in just 20 countries, and rural, female, elderly, illiterate, and low-income populations are being left behind.

(3) Studies suggest that women are disproportionately affected by a digital gap in developing countries, where there are on average 23 percent fewer women online than men. Bringing an additional 600,000,000 women online could contribute \$13,000,000,000 to \$18,000,000,000 to annual GDP across 144 developing countries.

(4) The United States has been a leader in promoting access to an open, secure, interoperable Internet around the world. Recognizing that support for expanded Internet access furthers United States economic and foreign policy interests, including efforts to end extreme global poverty and enabling resilient, democratic societies, the Department of State launched a diplomatic effort called "Global Connect".

(5) Internet access in developing countries is hampered, in part, by a lack of infrastructure and a poor regulatory environment for investment. Build-once policies and approaches, which seek to coordinate public and private sector investments in roads and other critical infrastructure, can reduce the number and scale of excavation and construction activities when installing telecommunications infrastructure in rights-of-way, thereby reducing installation costs for high-speed Internet networks and serving as a development best practice.

SEC. 4. EXPANDING INTERNET ACCESS IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES.

(a) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

(1) APPROPRIATE CONGRESSIONAL COMMITTEES.—The term "appropriate congressional committees" means—

(A) the Committee on Foreign Relations, the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation, and the Committee on Appropriations of the Senate; and

(B) the Committee on Foreign Affairs, the Committee on Energy and Commerce, and the Committee on Appropriations of the House of Representatives.

(2) BROADBAND.—The term "broadband" means an Internet Protocol-based transmission service that enables users to send and receive voice, video, data, graphics, or a combination thereof, using technologies including fiber optic, mobile, satellite, and Wi-Fi.

(3) BROADBAND CONDUIT.—The term "broadband conduit" means a conduit for fiber optic cables and other connectivity technologies that support broadband or wireless facilities for broadband service.

(4) BUILD-ONCE POLICIES AND APPROACHES.—The term "build-once policies and approaches" means policies or practices that encourage the integration of Internet infrastructure into traditional infrastructure projects that minimize the number and scale of excavation and construction activities when installing telecommunications infrastructure in rights-of-way to reduce costs,

such as by laying fiber optic cable simultaneously with road construction.

(5) STAKEHOLDERS.—The term "stakeholders" means the private sector, the public sector, cooperatives, civil society, the technical community that develops Internet technologies, standards, implementation, operations, and applications, and other groups that are working to increase Internet access or are impacted by the lack of Internet access in their communities.

(b) POLICY.—It is the policy of the United States to consult, partner, and coordinate with the governments of foreign countries, international organizations, regional economic communities, businesses, civil society, and other stakeholders in a concerted effort to close the digital gap by increasing public and private investments in secure Internet infrastructure and creating conditions for universal Internet access and usage worldwide by promoting—

(1) first-time access to fixed or mobile broadband Internet by 2027 for at least 1,500,000,000 people living in urban and rural areas in developing countries;

(2) Internet deployment and related coordination, capacity building, and build-once policies and approaches in developing countries, including actions to encourage—

(A) standardization of build-once policies and approaches for the inclusion of broadband conduit in rights-of-way projects that are funded, co-funded, or partially financed by the United States or any international organization that includes the United States as a member, in consultation with telecommunications providers, unless a cost-benefit analysis determines that the cost of such approach outweighs the benefits;

(B) adoption and integration of build-once policies and approaches into the development and investment strategies of national and local government agencies of developing countries and donor governments and organizations that will enhance coordination with the private sector for road building, pipe laying, major infrastructure projects, and development-related construction such as schools, clinics, and civic buildings;

(C) provision of increased financial support by international organizations, including through grants, loans, technical assistance, and partnerships to expand information and communications access and Internet connectivity; and

(D) avoidance of vendors and contractors likely to be subject to extrajudicial direction from a foreign government;

(3) policy and regulatory approaches that promote a competitive market for investment and innovation in Internet infrastructure and service to encourage first-time, affordable access to the Internet in developing countries, including actions to encourage, as appropriate—

(A) the integration of universal and gender-equitable Internet access and adoption goals, to be informed by the collection of related gender disaggregated data and research on social norms that often limit women's and girls' use of the Internet, into national development plans and United States Government country-level strategies;

(B) effective, transparent, and efficient spectrum allocation processes and reforms of competition laws that may impede the ability of companies to provide Internet services; and

(C) efforts to improve procurement processes to help attract and incentivize investment in secure Internet infrastructure;

(4) the removal of tax and regulatory barriers to Internet access, as appropriate;

(5) the use of the Internet to increase economic growth and trade, including, as appropriate—

(A) policies and strategies to remove restrictions to e-commerce, cross-border information flows, and competitive marketplaces; and

(B) entrepreneurship and distance learning enabled by access to technology;

(6) the use of the Internet to bolster democracy, government accountability, transparency, gender equity, and human rights, including through the establishment of policies, initiatives, and investments that—

(A) support the development of national broadband plans or information and communication technologies strategies that are consistent with fundamental civil and political rights, including freedom of expression, religion, belief, assembly, and association;

(B) expand online access to government information and services to enhance government accountability and service delivery, including for areas in which government may have limited presence; and

(C) support expression of free speech and enable political organizing and activism in support of human rights and democracy through activities that expand access to independent sources of news and information and safeguard human rights and fundamental freedoms online, in compliance with international human rights standards;

(7) programs and mechanisms that actively promote and advance access to and adoption of Internet and other information and communications technologies by women, people with disabilities, minorities, low-income and marginalized groups, and underserved populations, such as programs that address social norms and barriers to women's active participation in the digital economy or Internet policymaking;

(8) mechanisms for public and private financing of rural broadband connectivity and digital inclusion;

(9) public Internet access facilities and Wi-Fi networks in places such as libraries, government buildings, community centers, and schools;

(10) the creation and support of research and educational networks;

(11) cybersecurity, data protection, and privacy, including international use of the latest version of the National Institute of Standards and Technology Framework for Improving Critical Infrastructure Cybersecurity; and

(12) interagency coordination and cooperation across all executive branch agencies regarding the promotion of Internet initiatives as a part of United States foreign policy.

(c) DEPARTMENT OF STATE.—The Secretary of State, in coordination with other agencies, multilateral institutions, foreign countries, and stakeholders, shall advance the policy articulated in this Act and promote expanded Internet connectivity worldwide, as appropriate, by—

(1) encouraging foreign countries to prioritize secure Internet connectivity in development plans;

(2) promoting the formation of region-specific multi-sector working groups to ensure technical and regulatory best practices; and

(3) encouraging the development of digital literacy programs in developing countries.

(d) USAID.—The Administrator of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) should advance the policy articulated in this Act and support expanded Internet connectivity worldwide, as appropriate, by—

(1) supporting efforts to expand secure Internet infrastructure and improve digital literacy, and other appropriate measures to improve Internet connectivity and usage, in close coordination with the Secretary of State;

(2) encouraging public and private investment in Internet infrastructure and services

of developing countries that takes into consideration the data security and integrity risks attendant to the products and services of vendors likely to be subject to extrajudicial direction from a foreign government;

(3) integrating efforts to expand Internet access, develop appropriate, sustainable, and equitable technologies, and enhance digital literacy and the availability of relevant local content across development sectors, such as USAID health, education, agriculture, and economic development programs;

(4) expanding the utilization of information and communications technologies in humanitarian aid and disaster relief responses and United States operations involving reconstruction and stabilization to improve donor coordination, reduce duplication and waste, capture and share lessons learned, and augment disaster preparedness and risk mitigation strategies;

(5) establishing and promoting guidelines for the protection of personal information of individuals served by humanitarian, disaster, and development programs directly through the United States Government, and through contracts funded by the United States Government and by international organizations; and

(6) establishing programs that directly address and seek to close gaps in access, adoption, and use of the Internet and other information and communications technologies by women, minorities, and other marginalized groups.

(e) **PEACE CORPS.**—Section 3 of the Peace Corps Act (22 U.S.C. 2502) is amended—

(1) by redesignating subsection (h) as subsection (e); and

(2) by adding at the end the following:

“(f) It is the sense of Congress that access to the Internet can transform agriculture, community economic development, education, environment, health, and youth development, which are the sectors in which Peace Corps develops positions for volunteers.

“(g) In giving attention to the programs, projects, training, and other activities referred to in subsection (f), the Peace Corps should develop positions for volunteers that include leveraging the Internet, as appropriate, for development, education, and social and economic mobility.”

(f) **LEVERAGING INTERNATIONAL SUPPORT.**—In pursuing the policy described in this Act, the President should direct United States representatives to appropriate international bodies to use the influence of the United States, consistent with the broad development goals of the United States, to advocate that each such body—

(1) commit to increase efforts and coordination to promote affordable, open, and gender-equitable Internet access, in partnership with stakeholders and consistent with host countries' absorptive capacity;

(2) integrate affordable and gender-equitable Internet access data into existing economic and business assessments, evaluations, and indexes such as the Millennium Challenge Corporation constraints analysis, the Doing Business reports, International Monetary Fund Article IV assessments and country reports, and the Affordability Drivers Index;

(3) standardize the inclusion of broadband conduit as part of highway or comparable construction projects in developing countries, in consultation with telecommunications providers, unless—

(A) such inclusion would create an undue burden;

(B) such inclusion is not necessary based on the availability of existing broadband infrastructure;

(C) such inclusion would require the incorporation of the hardware, software, or maintenance of vendors likely to be subject to extrajudicial direction from a foreign government; or

(D) a cost-benefit analysis determines that the cost of such inclusion outweighs the benefits;

(4) provide technical assistance to the regulatory authorities in developing countries to remove unnecessary barriers to investment and develop regulations to support market growth and development;

(5) utilize clear, accountable, and metric-based targets, including targets with gender-disaggregated data, to measure the effectiveness of efforts to promote Internet access; and

(6) promote and protect human rights online, such as the freedoms of expression, religion, belief, assembly, and association, through resolutions, public statements, projects, and initiatives, and advocating that member states of such bodies are held accountable for violations.

(g) **REPORTING REQUIREMENT ON IMPLEMENTATION EFFORTS.**—Not later than one year after the date of the enactment of this Act, the President shall submit to the appropriate congressional committees a report on efforts to implement the policy described in this Act and, to the extent practicable, describe efforts by the United States Government to—

(1) provide technical and regulatory assistance to promote Internet access in developing countries;

(2) strengthen and support development of regulations that incentivize market growth that contributes to increased Internet access in developing countries;

(3) encourage public and private investment in Internet infrastructure, including broadband networks and services, in developing countries;

(4) increase gender-equitable Internet access and close gender gaps in Internet and other information and communications technology adoption and use, especially in countries in which social norms limit such adoption and use by women and girls, and otherwise encourage or support Internet deployment, competition, and adoption; and

(5) conduct outreach and explore partnership opportunities with the private sector on activities that advance the policy described in this Act.

SEC. 5. COST LIMITATION.

No additional funds are authorized to be appropriated to carry out the provisions of this Act.

SEC. 6. RULE OF CONSTRUCTION.

Nothing in this Act may be construed to infringe upon the related functions of any Executive agency (as defined in section 105 of title 5, United States Code) vested in such agency under any other provision of law.

The **SPEAKER** pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from New York (Mr. ENGEL) and the gentleman from Texas (Mr. WRIGHT) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New York.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. ENGEL. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on H.R. 1359.

The **SPEAKER** pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from New York?

There was no objection.

Mr. ENGEL. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Madam Speaker, when we talk about our development efforts around the world, we often focus on very big concepts, promoting democracy and human rights, making governments more open and accountable, expanding economic opportunity.

Those are, of course, very important ideas, and we need to keep those big-picture goals in mind. But we also need to be working constantly to develop the specific day-to-day tools and efforts that will help us advance towards those goals.

In the 21st century, a lot of those tools have to do with technology. Think of the way the internet has changed the global economy; the way technology has improved communication; the sharing of information; the ability of people to participate in worldwide markets and conversations.

Now, think of the fact that 4 billion people around the developing world do not have access to the internet; think of the untapped potential, the number of people who cannot participate in a constantly expanding online marketplace of goods and services and ideas.

The number of people with stories to tell, whether they are about life in remote communities or the corruption of a repressive government, but who cannot get their hands on the modern-day tools we use to communicate with one another; the number of people who cannot get information about a new opportunity or an impending disaster because they don't have a laptop or a smart phone.

As technology continues to rush forward in so many aspects of modern life, unfortunately, far too many people are being left behind. This bill aims to help close that so-called digital gap.

This legislation would push the State Department, USAID, the Peace Corps, and American representatives in international bodies to incorporate internet access into development planning.

There are a number of ways we want to do this:

Through diplomacy, advising other governments to prioritize this issue; through development, by incorporating this priority into our work on the ground, especially with respect to women, minorities, and other marginalized groups; and in the international and multilateral groups conducting assessments and evaluations of development progress, we want to see access to the internet as an important goal and metric.

This legislation builds on our country's longstanding leadership role in this area.

Let's not forget, the United States created and advanced the internet in the first place, and Congress has been working on this for decades, starting with the High Performance Computing Act of 1991, which is credited for helping create the first internet browser.

It is an important legacy to build on. And it coincides with an important foreign policy goal.

So I want to thank Mr. WRIGHT of Texas, this bill's author, along with

Ranking Member MCCAUL and Representatives LIEU and BERA, two able members of the Foreign Affairs Committee for their hard work.

I am glad to support this measure, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. WRIGHT. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Madam Speaker, I rise today in support of the Digital GAP Act of 2019, which I was proud to introduce with Ranking Member MCCAUL and Representatives LIEU and BERA.

In our increasingly connected world, internet access is a tremendous driver of economic growth. But 60 percent of the world's population remains offline and out of reach of U.S. businesses, organizations, and educators—largely due to a lack of telecommunications infrastructure.

The Digital GAP Act will promote commonsense “build once” policies to help ensure that companies have opportunities to incorporate telecommunications into new infrastructure construction projects.

This will provide opportunities to the private sector and reduce the cost of bringing new communities online.

The bill also presses for the removal of onerous tax and regulatory barriers to Internet access, and calls on the State Department, USAID, and other government agencies, to partner with businesses to increase private investment in internet infrastructure in developing countries.

As we compete overseas with an increasingly aggressive China, we must make America's assistance and development strategies more effective.

Bills like the Digital GAP Act and the Championing American Business through Diplomacy Act, which passed 2 weeks ago, will do just that by strengthening the United States partnership with the private sector.

Madam Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this bipartisan legislation, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. ENGEL. Madam Speaker, the internet is an incredible tool that has shaped the world in the last generation.

It allows entrepreneurs in emerging markets to sell their products in global markets. It allows citizens and journalists living under oppressive regimes or in war zones to get information out to the world.

This bill will establish that our foreign policy is to help advance these positive developments.

I urge its passage. It passed the House in the last Congress, and I hope the other body will take it up soon.

Madam Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from New York (Mr. ENGEL) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 1359.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the

rules were suspended and the bill was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

□ 1630

INTERCOUNTRY ADOPTION INFORMATION ACT OF 2019

Mr. CASTRO of Texas. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 1952) to amend the Intercountry Adoption Act of 2000 to require the Secretary of State to report on intercountry adoptions from countries which have significantly reduced adoption rates involving immigration to the United States, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 1952

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the “Inter-country Adoption Information Act of 2019”.

SEC. 2. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION TO BE INCLUDED IN ANNUAL REPORT ON INTERCOUNTRY ADOPTIONS.

(a) REPORT ELEMENTS.—Section 104(b) of the Intercountry Adoption Act of 2000 (42 U.S.C. 14914(b)) is amended by adding at the end the following new paragraphs:

“(9) A list of countries that established or maintained a significant law or regulation that prevented or prohibited adoptions involving immigration to the United States, regardless of whether such adoptions occurred under the Convention.

“(10) For each country listed under paragraph (9), the date on which the law or regulation was initially implemented.

“(11) Information on efforts taken with respect to a country listed under paragraph (9) to encourage the resumption of halted or stalled adoption proceedings involving immigration to the United States, regardless of whether the adoptions would have occurred under the Convention.

“(12) Information on any action the Secretary carried out that prevented, prohibited, or halted any adoptions involving immigration to the United States, regardless of whether the adoptions occurred under the Convention.

“(13) For each country listed pursuant to paragraph (12), a description of—

“(A) what policies, procedures, resources, and safeguards the country lacks, or other shortcomings or circumstances, that caused the action to be carried out;

“(B) what progress the country has made to alleviate those shortcomings; and

“(C) what steps the Department of State has taken in order to assist the country to reopen intercountry adoptions.

“(14) An assessment of the impact of the fee schedule of the Intercountry Adoption Accreditation and Maintenance Entity on families seeking to adopt internationally, especially low-income families, families seeking to adopt sibling groups, or families seeking to adopt children with disabilities.”.

(b) PUBLIC AVAILABILITY OF REPORT.—Section 104 of the Intercountry Adoption Act of 2000 (42 U.S.C. 14914) is amended by adding at the end the following new subsection:

“(c) PUBLIC AVAILABILITY OF REPORT.—The Secretary shall make the information contained in the report required under subsection (a) available to the public on the website of the Department of State.”.

(c) PRIVACY CONCERNS.—In complying with the amendments made by subsections (a) and (b), the Secretary shall avoid, to the maximum extent practicable, disclosing any personally identifiable information relating to United States citizens or the adoptees of such citizens.

(d) CONFORMING AMENDMENT.—Section 104(a) of the Intercountry Adoption Act of 2000 (42 U.S.C. 14914(a)) is amended by striking “International Relations” and inserting “Foreign Affairs”.

(e) APPLICATION DATE.—The amendments made by this section shall apply with respect to reports required to be submitted under section 104 of the Intercountry Adoption Act of 2000 (42 U.S.C. 14914) beginning on the date that is 180 days after the date of enactment of this Act.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. CASTRO) and the gentleman from Texas (Mr. WRIGHT) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas (Mr. CASTRO).

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. CASTRO of Texas. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on H.R. 1952, as amended.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Texas?

There was no objection.

Mr. CASTRO of Texas. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

First of all, I thank Mr. COLLINS and Mr. LANGEVIN for their hard work on this bill that would help ease some of the problems parents face when they are trying to adopt children from other countries.

Madam Speaker, the process of adopting a child is a tough one, especially when that child is overseas. It is expensive and often emotionally taxing for the parents. It is filled with legal twists and turns and often difficult requirements, but it is worth it for these loving parents who want to give children from faraway places a home and the chance to be part of a family and a good future.

What can make this process even more daunting is when foreign governments change their laws without any sort of notice or explanation. For parents who have to deal with this, it is like having the rug pulled out from under them.

In 2018, the number of intercountry adoptions to the United States declined by roughly 600. We saw a similar decline the year before. Part of the reason is that China and the Democratic Republic of the Congo changed their policies, for example.

I can't imagine the frustration and anxiety of parents who learned their adoption has been delayed or derailed. This bill helps to make things easier on those families.

It would require the State Department to stay up to date on laws and policies dealing with intercountry adoptions and make sure American