

118TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

S. 1651

To encourage increased trade and investment between the United States and the countries in the Western Balkans, and for other purposes.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

MAY 17, 2023

Mrs. SHAHEEN (for herself, Mr. WICKER, Mr. CARDIN, Mr. DURBIN, and Mr. VAN HOLLEN) introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations

A BILL

To encourage increased trade and investment between the United States and the countries in the Western Balkans, 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; TABLE OF CONTENTS.**

4 (a) SHORT TITLE.—This Act may be cited as the
5 “Western Balkans Democracy and Prosperity Act”.

6 (b) TABLE OF CONTENTS.—The table of contents for
7 this Act is as follows:

- Sec. 1. Short title; table of contents.
- Sec. 2. Findings.
- Sec. 3. Sense of Congress.
- Sec. 4. Definitions.

- Sec. 5. Codification of sanctions relating to the Western Balkans.
- Sec. 6. Congressional review of certain actions relating to sanctions imposed with respect to the Western Balkans.
- Sec. 7. Democratic and economic development and prosperity initiatives.
- Sec. 8. Countering malign influence and promoting cross-cultural engagement.
- Sec. 9. Peace Corps in the Western Balkans.
- Sec. 10. Balkans Youth Leadership Initiative.
- Sec. 11. Supporting cybersecurity and cyber resilience in the Western Balkans.
- Sec. 12. Sense of Congress regarding an interim agreement.
- Sec. 13. Sunset.

1 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

2 Congress finds the following:

3 (1) The Western Balkans countries (the Repub-
 4 lic of Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Republic
 5 of Kosovo, Montenegro, the Republic of North Mac-
 6 edonia, and the Republic of Serbia) form a plural-
 7 istic, multi-ethnic region in the heart of Europe that
 8 is critical to the peace, stability, and prosperity of
 9 Europe.

10 (2) Continued peace, stability, and prosperity in
 11 the Western Balkans is directly tied to opportunities
 12 for democratic and economic advancement available
 13 to the citizens and residents of those 6 countries.

14 (3) It is in the mutual interest of the United
 15 States and the 6 countries of the Western Balkans
 16 to promote stable and sustainable economic growth
 17 and development in the region.

18 (4) The reforms and integration with the Euro-
 19 pean Union pursued by countries in the Western

1 Balkans have led to significant democratic and eco-
2 nomic progress in the region.

3 (5) Despite economic progress, rates of poverty
4 and unemployment in the Western Balkans remain
5 higher than in neighboring European Union coun-
6 tries.

7 (6) Out-migration, particularly of youth, is af-
8 fecting demographics in each Western Balkans coun-
9 try, resulting in negative population growth in all 6
10 countries.

11 (7) Creating an enabling environment for trans-
12 parent, accountable, and market-oriented investment
13 and creating employment opportunities in the West-
14 ern Balkans, especially for youth, can provide power-
15 ful tools for economic development and for encour-
16 aging broader participation in a political process
17 that increases prosperity for all.

18 (8) Offering opportunities for inclusive, trans-
19 parent economic growth and merit-based employ-
20 ment to people living in the Western Balkans will
21 encourage higher levels of trade and direct invest-
22 ment and support positive economic and political de-
23 velopments occurring throughout the region.

24 (9) Existing regional economic efforts, such as
25 the Common Regional Market and the Open Balkan

1 initiative, when aligned with European Union stand-
2 ards, norms, and regulations, have the potential to
3 improve the economic conditions in the Western Bal-
4 kans, while promoting inclusion and transparency.

5 (10) The Department of Commerce, through its
6 Foreign Commercial Service, plays an important role
7 in promoting and facilitating opportunities for
8 United States trade and investment.

9 (11) Corruption continues to plague the West-
10 ern Balkans and represents one of the greatest im-
11 pediments to further economic and political develop-
12 ment in the region.

13 (12) Disinformation campaigns targeting the
14 Western Balkans threaten the credibility of Western
15 democratic institutions.

16 (13) Vulnerabilities to corrosive capital, malign
17 economic influence, interference, and economic coer-
18 cion are acutely present in Western Balkans econo-
19 mies.

20 (14) Vulnerability to cyberattacks or attacks on
21 information and communication technology infra-
22 structure increases risks to the functioning of gov-
23 ernment and the delivery of public services.

1 (15) United States Cyber Command plays a
2 critical role in defending the national security inter-
3 ests of the United States.

4 (16) Securing domestic and international cyber
5 networks and electronic infrastructure is a national
6 security priority for the United States, which is ex-
7 emplified by offices and programs across the Federal
8 Government that support cyber security, including—

9 (A) the Department of Homeland Secu-
10 rity’s Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security
11 Agency;

12 (B) the Department of State’s Bureau of
13 Cyberspace and Digital Policy;

14 (C) the United States Agency for Inter-
15 national Development’s Digital Strategy; and

16 (D) the Department of Energy’s
17 CyberForce Program.

18 (17) Corruption and disinformation proliferate
19 in political environments marked by autocratic con-
20 trol or partisan conflict.

21 (18) Dependence on Russian sources of oil and
22 natural gas for the countries of the Western Balkans
23 ties their economies and politics to the Russian Fed-
24 eration and inhibits their aspirations for European
25 integration.

1 (19) The reliance of the Western Balkans on
2 fossil fuels for energy sources causes damage to the
3 environment and to human health, while inhibiting
4 economic development in the region.

5 (20) Reducing the reliance of the Western Bal-
6 kans on Russian natural gas supplies is in the na-
7 tional interest of the United States.

8 (21) The growing influence of China in the
9 Western Balkans could also have a deleterious im-
10 pact on strategic competition, democracy, and eco-
11 nomic integration with Europe.

12 (22) The United States International Develop-
13 ment Finance Corporation plays an important role
14 in the pursuit of United States policy goals focused
15 on economic development.

16 (23) In March 2022, President Biden launched
17 the European Democratic Resilience Initiative to
18 bolster democratic resilience, advance anti-corruption
19 efforts, and defend human rights in Ukraine and its
20 neighbors in response to Russia’s war of aggression.

21 **SEC. 3. SENSE OF CONGRESS.**

22 It is a sense of Congress that the United States
23 should—

1 (1) encourage increased trade and investment
2 between the United States and allies and partners in
3 the Western Balkans;

4 (2) expand United States assistance to regional
5 integration efforts in the Western Balkans;

6 (3) strengthen and expand regional economic
7 integration in the Western Balkans, especially enter-
8 prises owned by and employing women and youth;

9 (4) work with allies and partners committed to
10 improving the rule of law, energy resource diver-
11 sification, democratic and economic reform, and the
12 eradication of poverty in the Western Balkans;

13 (5) increase United States trade and investment
14 with the Western Balkans, particularly in ways
15 that—

16 (A) decrease dependence on Russian en-
17 ergy sources and fossil fuels;

18 (B) increase energy diversification, effi-
19 ciency, and conservation; and

20 (C) facilitate the transition to cleaner and
21 more reliable sources of energy, including re-
22 newables;

23 (6) support the efforts of countries of the West-
24 ern Balkans to develop—

25 (A) strong civil societies;

1 (B) public-private partnerships and dia-
2 logue in policy development;

3 (C) independent media;

4 (D) transparent, accountable, citizen-re-
5 sponsive governance, including expanded rep-
6 resentation for women and youth in democratic
7 spaces; and

8 (E) political stability;

9 (7) support the expeditious accession of the
10 Western Balkans countries to the European Union
11 and to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (re-
12 ferred to in this section as “NATO”) for those that
13 desire and meet the criteria for membership;

14 (8) support—

15 (A) maintaining the full European Union
16 Force (EUFOR) mandate in Bosnia and
17 Herzegovina as being in the national security
18 interests of the United States;

19 (B) encouraging NATO and the European
20 Union to review their mission mandates and
21 posture in Bosnia and Herzegovina to ensure
22 they are playing a proactive role in establishing
23 a safe and secure environment, particularly the
24 defense environment;

1 (C) using the voice of the United States in
2 NATO to encourage alliance planning and sup-
3 port of an international military force to main-
4 tain a safe and secure environment in Bosnia
5 and Herzegovina, especially if Russia blocks re-
6 authorization of the mission in the United Na-
7 tions; and

8 (D) a strengthened NATO headquarters in
9 Sarajevo;

10 (9) continue security cooperation with the Re-
11 public of Albania, Montenegro, and the Republic of
12 North Macedonia through the auspices of NATO
13 and through continued bilateral cooperation;

14 (10) continue to support Montenegro's ongoing
15 accession negotiations with the European Union, in-
16 cluding by providing assistance to Montenegro to
17 help the country promptly meet European Union
18 membership criteria;

19 (11) continue to support the applications of the
20 Republic of North Macedonia and the Republic of
21 Albania for European Union membership by sup-
22 porting improvement of their respective abilities to
23 meet democracy benchmarks required for accession;

24 (12) continue to support the overarching mis-
25 sion of the Open Balkan initiative provided the ini-

1 initiative remains inclusive of all Western Balkans
2 countries and remains aligned with the objectives
3 and standards laid out by the European Union for
4 requirements for accession to the European Union;

5 (13) continue to support the pursuit by Bosnia
6 and Herzegovina of European Union candidate sta-
7 tus by encouraging meaningful advancement of its
8 reform agenda;

9 (14) continue to support the cultural heritage,
10 and recognize the languages of the Western Balkans;

11 (15) coordinate closely with the European
12 Union, the United Kingdom, and other allies and
13 partners on sanctions designations and work to align
14 efforts as much as possible to demonstrate a clear
15 commitment to upholding democratic values;

16 (16) expand bilateral security cooperation with
17 NATO-aspirant Western Balkan countries, particu-
18 larly efforts focused on regional integration and co-
19 operation, including through the Adriatic Charter,
20 done at Tirana May 2, 2003;

21 (17) increase efforts to combat Russian
22 disinformation campaigns and any other malign, de-
23 stabilizing, or disruptive activities targeting the
24 Western Balkans through engagement with govern-

1 ment institutions, political stakeholders, journalists,
2 civil society organizations, and industry leaders;

3 (18) develop a series of cyber resilience stand-
4 ards, consistent with the Enhanced Cyber Defense
5 Policy and Readiness Action Plan endorsed at the
6 2014 Wales Summit of the North Atlantic Treaty
7 Organization to expand cooperation with partners
8 and allies, including in the Western Balkans, on
9 cyber security and ICT infrastructure defenses;

10 (19) articulate clearly and unambiguously the
11 United States commitment to supporting democratic
12 values and respect for international law as the sole
13 path forward for the countries of the Western Bal-
14 kans; and

15 (20) support the mission of the Peace Corps to
16 promote world peace and friendship by helping the
17 people of interested countries to meet their need for
18 trained men and women, which provides an inval-
19 uable opportunity to connect the American people
20 with the people of the Western Balkans.

21 **SEC. 4. DEFINITIONS.**

22 In this Act:

23 (1) APPROPRIATE CONGRESSIONAL COMMIT-
24 TEES.—The term “appropriate congressional com-
25 mittees” means—

1 (A) the Committee on Foreign Relations of
2 the Senate;

3 (B) the Committee on Appropriations of
4 the Senate;

5 (C) the Committee on Foreign Affairs of
6 the House of Representatives; and

7 (D) the Committee on Appropriations of
8 the House of Representatives.

9 (2) WESTERN BALKANS.—The term “Western
10 Balkans” means the region comprised of the fol-
11 lowing countries:

12 (A) The Republic of Albania.

13 (B) Bosnia and Herzegovina.

14 (C) Montenegro.

15 (D) The Republic of Kosovo.

16 (E) The Republic of North Macedonia.

17 (F) The Republic of Serbia.

18 (3) WESTERN BALKANS COUNTRY.—The term
19 “Western Balkan country” means any country listed
20 in subparagraphs (A) through (F) of paragraph (2).

21 **SEC. 5. CODIFICATION OF SANCTIONS RELATING TO THE**
22 **WESTERN BALKANS.**

23 (a) IN GENERAL.—Each sanction imposed through
24 Executive orders described in subsection (b), including
25 each sanction imposed with respect to a person under such

1 an Executive order, as of the date of the enactment of
2 this Act, shall remain in effect, except as provided in sub-
3 section (c).

4 (b) EXECUTIVE ORDERS SPECIFIED.—The Executive
5 orders specified in this subsection are—

6 (1) Executive Order 13219 (50 U.S.C. 1701
7 note; relating to blocking property of persons who
8 threaten international stabilization efforts in the
9 Western Balkans), as in effect on the date of the en-
10 actment of this Act; and

11 (2) Executive Order 14033 (50 U.S.C. 1701
12 note; relating to blocking property and suspending
13 entry into the United States of certain persons con-
14 tributing to the destabilizing situation in the West-
15 ern Balkans), as in effect on such date of enact-
16 ment.

17 (c) TERMINATION OF SANCTIONS.—The President
18 may terminate the application of a sanction described in
19 subsection (a) with respect to a person if the President
20 certifies to the appropriate congressional committees
21 that—

22 (1) such person—

23 (A) is not engaging in the activity that was
24 the basis for such sanctions; or

1 (B) has taken significant verifiable steps
2 toward stopping such activity; and

3 (2) the President has received reliable assur-
4 ances that such person will not knowingly engage in
5 activity subject to such sanctions in the future.

6 **SEC. 6. CONGRESSIONAL REVIEW OF CERTAIN ACTIONS RE-**
7 **LATING TO SANCTIONS IMPOSED WITH RE-**
8 **SPECT TO THE WESTERN BALKANS.**

9 (a) DEFINITIONS.—

10 (1) COVERED CONGRESSIONAL COMMITTEES
11 AND LEADERSHIP.—In this section, the term “cov-
12 ered congressional committees and leadership”
13 means—

14 (A) the Committee on Banking, Housing,
15 and Urban Affairs of the Senate;

16 (B) the Committee on Foreign Relations of
17 the Senate;

18 (C) the Majority Leader of the Senate;

19 (D) the Minority Leader of the Senate;

20 (E) the Committee on Financial Services
21 of the House of Representatives;

22 (F) the Committee on Foreign Affairs of
23 the House of Representatives;

24 (G) the Speaker of the House of Rep-
25 resentatives;

1 (H) the Majority Leader of the House of
2 Representatives; and

3 (I) the Minority Leader of the House of
4 Representatives.

5 (2) JOINT RESOLUTION OF APPROVAL.—The
6 term “joint resolution of approval” means only a
7 joint resolution of either House of Congress—

8 (A) the title of which is as follows: “A joint
9 resolution approving the President’s proposal to
10 take an action relating to the application of cer-
11 tain sanctions with respect to the Western Bal-
12 kans.”; and

13 (B) the sole matter after the resolving
14 clause of which is the following: “Congress ap-
15 proves of the action relating to the application
16 of sanctions imposed with respect to the West-
17 ern Balkans proposed by the President in the
18 report submitted to Congress under section
19 6(b)(1) of the Western Balkans Democracy and
20 Prosperity Act on _____ relating to
21 _____.”, with the first blank space
22 being filled with the appropriate date and the
23 second blank space being filled with a short de-
24 scription of the proposed action.

1 (3) JOINT RESOLUTION OF DISAPPROVAL.—The
 2 term “joint resolution of disapproval” means only a
 3 joint resolution of either House of Congress—

4 (A) the title of which is as follows: “A joint
 5 resolution disapproving the President’s proposal
 6 to take an action relating to the application of
 7 certain sanctions with respect to the Western
 8 Balkans.”; and

9 (B) the sole matter after the resolving
 10 clause of which is the following: “Congress dis-
 11 approves of the action relating to the applica-
 12 tion of sanctions imposed with respect to the
 13 Western Balkans proposed by the President in
 14 the report submitted to Congress under section
 15 6(b)(1) of the Western Balkans Democracy and
 16 Prosperity Act on _____ relating to
 17 _____.”, with the first blank space
 18 being filled with the appropriate date and the
 19 second blank space being filled with a short de-
 20 scription of the proposed action.

21 (b) SUBMISSION TO CONGRESS OF PROPOSED AC-
 22 TION.—

23 (1) IN GENERAL.—Notwithstanding any other
 24 provision of law, before taking any action described
 25 in paragraph (2)(A), the President shall submit a

report to the covered congressional committees and leadership that includes—

(A) a description of the proposed action;

and

(B) a justification for the proposed action.

(2) ACTIONS AND SANCTIONS DESCRIBED.—

(A) ACTIONS DESCRIBED.—An action described in this subparagraph is—

(i) an action to terminate the application of any sanction described in subparagraph (B);

(ii) with respect to a sanction described in subparagraph (B) imposed by the President with respect to a person, an action to waive the application of such sanction with respect to that person; or

(iii) a licensing action that significantly alters the foreign policy of the United States with respect to the Western Balkans.

(B) SANCTIONS DESCRIBED.—A sanction described in this subparagraph is a sanction imposed under—

(i) Executive Order 13219 (50 U.S.C. 1701 note; relating to blocking property of

persons who threaten international stabilization efforts in the Western Balkans), as in effect on the date of the enactment of this Act; or

(ii) Executive Order 14033 (50 U.S.C. 1701 note; relating to blocking property and suspending entry into the United States of certain persons contributing to the destabilizing situation in the Western Balkans), as in effect on the date of enactment of this Act.

(3) TYPE OF ACTION.—Each report submitted pursuant to paragraph (1) with respect to an action described in paragraph (2)(A) shall include a description of whether the action—

(A) is not intended to significantly alter the foreign policy of the United States with respect to the Western Balkans; or

(B) is intended to significantly alter the foreign policy of the United States with respect to the Western Balkans.

(4) INCLUSION OF ADDITIONAL MATTERS.—

(A) ADDITIONAL MATTERS.—Each report submitted pursuant to paragraph (1) that relates to an action that is intended to signifi-

1 cantly alter United States foreign policy with
2 respect to the Western Balkans, as determined
3 pursuant to paragraph (3)(B), shall include a
4 description of—

5 (i) the intended significant alteration
6 to such foreign policy;

7 (ii) the anticipated effect of the action
8 on the national security interests of the
9 United States; and

10 (iii) the policy objectives for which the
11 sanctions affected by the action were ini-
12 tially imposed.

13 (B) REQUESTS FROM BANKING AND FI-
14 NANCIAL SERVICES COMMITTEES.—The Com-
15 mittee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs
16 of the Senate or the Committee on Financial
17 Services of the House of Representatives may
18 request the submission to such committee of the
19 matters specified in clauses (ii) and (iii) of sub-
20 paragraph (A) with respect to a report sub-
21 mitted pursuant to paragraph (1) that relates
22 to an action that is not intended to significantly
23 alter United States foreign policy with regard
24 to the Western Balkans, as determined pursu-
25 ant to paragraph (3)(A).

1 (c) PERIOD FOR REVIEW BY CONGRESS.—

2 (1) IN GENERAL.—Except as provided in para-
3 graph (2), during the 90-legislative day period be-
4 ginning on the date on which the President submits
5 a report pursuant to subsection (b)(1)—

6 (A) in the case of a report that relates to
7 an action that is not intended to significantly
8 alter United States foreign policy with regard
9 to the Western Balkans, as determined pursu-
10 ant to subsection (b)(3)(A), the Committee on
11 Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs of the
12 Senate and the Committee on Financial Serv-
13 ices of the House of Representatives should, as
14 appropriate, hold hearings and briefings and
15 otherwise obtain information in order to fully
16 review the report; and

17 (B) in the case of a report that relates to
18 an action that is intended to significantly alter
19 United States foreign policy with regard to the
20 Western Balkans, as determined pursuant to
21 subsection (b)(3)(B), the Committee on Foreign
22 Relations of the Senate and the Committee on
23 Foreign Affairs of the House of Representatives
24 should, as appropriate, hold hearings and brief-

1 ings and otherwise obtain information in order
2 to fully review the report.

3 (2) EXCEPTION.—The period for congressional
4 review under paragraph (1) of a report submitted
5 pursuant to subsection (b)(1) shall be 120 calendar
6 days if the report is submitted on or after July 10
7 and on or before September 7 in any calendar year.

8 (3) LIMITATION ON ACTIONS DURING INITIAL
9 CONGRESSIONAL REVIEW PERIOD.—Notwithstanding
10 any other provision of law, during the congressional
11 review period described in paragraph (1) of a report
12 submitted pursuant to subsection (b)(1) proposing
13 an action described in subsection (b)(2), including
14 any additional period for such review as applicable
15 under the exception provided in paragraph (2), the
16 President may not take that action unless a joint
17 resolution of approval with respect to such action
18 has been enacted in accordance with subsection (d).

19 (4) LIMITATION ON ACTIONS DURING PRESI-
20 DENTIAL CONSIDERATION OF A JOINT RESOLUTION
21 OF DISAPPROVAL.—Notwithstanding any other pro-
22 vision of law, if a joint resolution of disapproval re-
23 lating to a report submitted pursuant to subsection
24 (b)(1) proposing an action described in subsection
25 (b)(2) passes both Houses of Congress in accordance

1 with subsection (d), the President may not take such
2 action until the date that is 12 days after the date
3 on which such joint resolution of disapproval has
4 been passed by both Houses of Congress.

5 (5) LIMITATION ON ACTIONS DURING CONGRES-
6 SIONAL RECONSIDERATION OF A JOINT RESOLUTION
7 OF DISAPPROVAL.—Notwithstanding any other pro-
8 vision of law, if a joint resolution of disapproval re-
9 lating to a report submitted pursuant to subsection
10 (b)(1) proposing an action described in subsection
11 (b)(2) passes both Houses of Congress in accordance
12 with subsection (d), and the President vetoes such
13 joint resolution, the President may not take such ac-
14 tion until 10 days after the date of the President’s
15 veto.

16 (6) EFFECT OF ENACTMENT OF A JOINT RESO-
17 LUTION OF DISAPPROVAL.—Notwithstanding any
18 other provision of law, if a joint resolution of dis-
19 approval relating to a report submitted pursuant to
20 subsection (b)(1) proposing an action described in
21 subsection (b)(2) is enacted in accordance with sub-
22 section (d), the President may not take such action.

23 (d) JOINT RESOLUTIONS OF DISAPPROVAL OR AP-
24 PROVAL.—

1 (1) INTRODUCTION.—During the 90-legislative
 2 day period described in subsection (c)(1), including
 3 any additional period applicable under the exception
 4 provided in subsection (c)(2), a joint resolution of
 5 approval or joint resolution of disapproval may be
 6 introduced—

7 (A) in the Senate, by the Majority Leader
 8 (or designee) or the Minority Leader (or des-
 9 ignee); and

10 (B) in the House of Representatives, by
 11 the Majority Leader or the Minority Leader.

12 (2) FLOOR CONSIDERATION IN HOUSE OF REP-
 13 RESENTATIVES.—If a committee of the House of
 14 Representatives to which a joint resolution of ap-
 15 proval or joint resolution of disapproval has been re-
 16 ferred does not report the joint resolution to the
 17 House of Representatives within 10 days after the
 18 date of referral, such committee shall be discharged
 19 from further consideration of the joint resolution.

20 (3) CONSIDERATION IN SENATE.—

21 (A) COMMITTEE REFERRAL.—A joint reso-
 22 lution of approval or joint resolution of dis-
 23 approval introduced in the Senate shall be—

24 (i) referred to the Committee on
 25 Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs of

1 the Senate if the joint resolution relates to
2 a report submitted pursuant to subsection
3 (b)(1) that relates to an action that is not
4 intended to significantly alter United
5 States foreign policy with regard to the
6 Russian Federation, as determined pursu-
7 ant to subsection (b)(3)(A); and

8 (ii) referred to the Committee on For-
9 eign Relations of the Senate if the joint
10 resolution relates to a report submitted
11 pursuant to subsection (b)(1) that relates
12 to an action that is intended to signifi-
13 cantly alter United States foreign policy
14 with respect to the Russian Federation, as
15 determined pursuant to subsection
16 (b)(3)(B).

17 (B) REPORTING AND DISCHARGE.—If the
18 committee to which a joint resolution of ap-
19 proval or joint resolution of disapproval was re-
20 ferred does not report the joint resolution to the
21 Senate within 10 days after the date of referral
22 of the joint resolution, such committee shall be
23 discharged from further consideration of the
24 joint resolution and the joint resolution shall be
25 placed on the appropriate calendar.

1 (C) PROCEEDING TO CONSIDERATION.—

2 Notwithstanding Rule XXII of the Standing
3 Rules of the Senate, it is in order at any time
4 after the Committee on Banking, Housing, and
5 Urban Affairs of the Senate or the Committee
6 on Foreign Relations of the Senate, as the case
7 may be, reports a joint resolution of approval or
8 joint resolution of disapproval to the Senate or
9 has been discharged from consideration of such
10 a joint resolution (even though a previous mo-
11 tion to the same effect has been disagreed to)
12 to move to proceed to the consideration of the
13 joint resolution, and all points of order against
14 the joint resolution (and against consideration
15 of the joint resolution) are waived. The motion
16 to proceed is not debatable. The motion is not
17 subject to a motion to postpone. A motion to
18 reconsider the vote by which the motion is
19 agreed to or disagreed to shall not be in order.

20 (D) RULINGS OF THE CHAIR ON PROCE-
21 DURE.—Appeals from the decisions of the Chair
22 relating to the application of the rules of the
23 Senate, as the case may be, to the procedure re-
24 lating to a joint resolution of approval or joint

1 resolution of disapproval shall be decided with-
 2 out debate.

3 (E) CONSIDERATION OF VETO MES-
 4 SAGES.—Debate in the Senate of any veto mes-
 5 sage with respect to a joint resolution of ap-
 6 proval or joint resolution of disapproval, includ-
 7 ing all debatable motions and appeals in con-
 8 nection with the joint resolution, shall be lim-
 9 ited to 10 hours, to be equally divided between,
 10 and controlled by, the Majority Leader of the
 11 Senate and the Minority Leader of the Senate,
 12 or their designees.

13 (4) RULES RELATING TO SENATE AND HOUSE
 14 OF REPRESENTATIVES.—

15 (A) TREATMENT OF SENATE JOINT RESO-
 16 LUTION IN HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.—In
 17 the House of Representatives, the following pro-
 18 cedures shall apply to a joint resolution of ap-
 19 proval or a joint resolution of disapproval re-
 20 ceived from the Senate (unless the House has
 21 already passed a joint resolution relating to the
 22 same proposed action):

23 (i) The joint resolution shall be re-
 24 ferred to the appropriate committees.

1 (ii) If a committee to which a joint
2 resolution has been referred has not re-
3 ported the joint resolution within 2 days
4 after the date of referral, such committee
5 shall be discharged from further consider-
6 ation of the joint resolution.

7 (iii) Beginning on the third legislative
8 day after each committee to which a joint
9 resolution has been referred reports the
10 joint resolution to the House of Represent-
11 atives or has been discharged from further
12 consideration thereof, it shall be in order
13 to move to proceed to consider the joint
14 resolution in the House of Representatives.
15 All points of order against the motion are
16 waived. Such a motion shall not be in
17 order after the House has disposed of a
18 motion to proceed on the joint resolution.
19 The previous question shall be considered
20 as ordered on the motion to its adoption
21 without intervening motion. The motion
22 shall not be debatable. A motion to recon-
23 sider the vote by which the motion is dis-
24 posed of shall not be in order.

(iv) The joint resolution shall be considered as read. All points of order against the joint resolution and against its consideration are waived. The previous question shall be considered as ordered on the joint resolution to final passage without intervening motion except 2 hours of debate equally divided and controlled by the sponsor of the joint resolution (or a designee) and an opponent. A motion to reconsider the vote on passage of the joint resolution shall not be in order.

(B) TREATMENT OF HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES JOINT RESOLUTION IN SENATE.—

(i) If, before the passage by the Senate of a joint resolution of approval or joint resolution of disapproval, the Senate receives an identical joint resolution from the House of Representatives, the following procedures shall apply:

(I) That joint resolution shall not be referred to a committee.

(II) With respect to that joint resolution—

1 (aa) the procedure in the
2 Senate shall be the same as if no
3 joint resolution had been received
4 from the House of Representa-
5 tives; but

6 (bb) the vote on passage
7 shall be on the joint resolution
8 from the House of Representa-
9 tives.

10 (ii) If, following passage of a joint
11 resolution of approval or joint resolution of
12 disapproval in the Senate, the Senate re-
13 ceives an identical joint resolution from the
14 House of Representatives, that joint reso-
15 lution shall be placed on the appropriate
16 Senate calendar.

17 (iii) If a joint resolution of approval
18 or a joint resolution of disapproval is re-
19 ceived from the House of Representatives,
20 and no companion joint resolution has
21 been introduced in the Senate, the Senate
22 procedures under this subsection shall
23 apply to the House of Representatives joint
24 resolution.

1 (C) APPLICATION TO REVENUE MEAS-
 2 URES.—The provisions of this paragraph shall
 3 not apply in the House of Representatives to a
 4 joint resolution of approval or joint resolution
 5 of disapproval that is a revenue measure.

6 (5) RULES OF HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
 7 AND SENATE.—This subsection is enacted by Con-
 8 gress—

9 (A) as an exercise of the rulemaking power
 10 of the Senate and the House of Representa-
 11 tives, respectively, and as such is deemed a part
 12 of the rules of each House, respectively, and su-
 13 persedes other rules only to the extent that it
 14 is inconsistent with such rules; and

15 (B) with full recognition of the constitu-
 16 tional right of either House to change the rules
 17 (so far as relating to the procedure of that
 18 House) at any time, in the same manner, and
 19 to the same extent as in the case of any other
 20 rule of that House.

21 **SEC. 7. DEMOCRATIC AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND**
 22 **PROSPERITY INITIATIVES.**

23 (a) ANTI-CORRUPTION INITIATIVE.—The Secretary
 24 of State, through ongoing and new programs, shall—

1 (1) seek to expand technical assistance in each
2 Western Balkans country to develop new national
3 anti-corruption strategies, or to strengthen existing
4 national anti-corruption strategies focused on prior-
5 ities, including good governance, election administra-
6 tion, and transparent economic investments, taking
7 into account local conditions and contingent on the
8 agreement of the host country government;

9 (2) seek to share best practices with, and pro-
10 vide training to, civilian law enforcement agencies
11 and judicial institutions, and other relevant adminis-
12 trative bodies, of the Western Balkans countries, to
13 improve the efficiency, transparency, and account-
14 ability of such agencies and institutions on priorities,
15 including the promotion of human rights;

16 (3) provide to the Western Balkans countries
17 support to combat corruption, particularly in the ju-
18 diciary, independent election oversight bodies, and
19 public procurement processes, and to strengthen reg-
20 ulatory and legislative oversight of critical govern-
21 ance areas, such as freedom of information and pub-
22 lic procurement, including by strengthening cyber
23 defenses and ICT infrastructure networks; and

24 (4) include the Western Balkans countries in
25 the European Democratic Resilience Initiative of the

1 Department of State, or any successor initiative, and
2 considers the Western Balkans as a recipient of
3 anti-corruption funding for such initiative.

4 (b) PRIORITIZING CYBER RESILIENCE, REGIONAL
5 TRADE, AND ECONOMIC COMPETITIVENESS.—

6 (1) SENSE OF CONGRESS.—It is the sense of
7 Congress that—

8 (A) promoting stronger economic, civic,
9 and political relationships among Western Bal-
10 kans countries will enable such countries to bet-
11 ter utilize existing resources and maximize their
12 economic security and democratic resilience by
13 reinforcing cyber defenses and increasing trade
14 in goods and services among other countries in
15 the region; and

16 (B) United States investments in and as-
17 sistance toward creating a more integrated re-
18 gion ensures political stability and security for
19 the region.

20 (2) 5-YEAR STRATEGY FOR ECONOMIC DEVEL-
21 OPMENT AND DEMOCRATIC RESILIENCE IN WESTERN
22 BALKANS.—Not later than 180 days after the date
23 of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of State
24 and the Administrator of the United States Agency
25 for International Development, in coordination with

1 the Secretary of the Treasury, the Secretary of Com-
2 merce, and the Chief Executive Officer of the United
3 States International Development Finance Corpora-
4 tion, shall submit to the appropriate congressional
5 committees a regional economic development and
6 democratic resilience strategy for the Western Bal-
7 kans that—

8 (A) considers the full set of tools and re-
9 sources available from the agencies overseen by
10 such Federal officials;

11 (B) includes efforts to ensure coordination
12 with multilateral and bilateral partners, such as
13 the European Union, the World Bank, and
14 other relevant assistance frameworks;

15 (C) includes an initial public assessment
16 of—

17 (i) economic opportunities for which
18 United States businesses, or those of other
19 like-minded partner countries, would be
20 competitive;

21 (ii) legal, economic, governance,
22 infrastructural, or other barriers limiting
23 United States trade and investment in the
24 Western Balkans;

1 (iii) the effectiveness of existing re-
2 gional cooperation initiatives, such as the
3 Open Balkan initiative and the Western
4 Balkans Common Regional Market; and

5 (iv) ways to increase United States
6 trade and investment in the Western Bal-
7 kans;

8 (D) develops human and institutional ca-
9 pacity and infrastructure across multiple sec-
10 tors of economies, including clean energy, en-
11 ergy efficiency, agriculture, small and medium-
12 sized enterprise development, health, and cyber
13 security;

14 (E) assists with the development and im-
15 plementation of regional and international trade
16 agreements;

17 (F) supports women-owned enterprises and
18 gender equality;

19 (G) promotes government and civil society
20 policies and programs that combat corruption
21 and encourage transparency, free and fair com-
22 petition, sound governance, judicial reform, en-
23 vironmental protection, and business environ-
24 ments conducive to sustainable and inclusive
25 economic growth; and

1 (H) includes a public diplomacy strategy
2 that describes the actions that will be taken by
3 relevant agencies to ensure that populations in
4 the Western Balkans are aware of the develop-
5 ment activities of the United States Govern-
6 ment.

7 (3) BRIEFING.—Not later than 90 days after
8 the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary
9 of State shall provide a briefing to the appropriate
10 congressional committees that describes the progress
11 made towards developing the strategy required
12 under paragraph (2).

13 (c) REGIONAL TRADE AND DEVELOPMENT INITIA-
14 TIVE.—

15 (1) AUTHORIZATION.—The Secretary of State
16 and the Administrator of the United States Agency
17 for International Development, in coordination with
18 the Chief Executive Officer of the United States
19 International Development Finance Corporation and
20 the Secretary of Commerce, shall coordinate a re-
21 gional trade and development initiative for the re-
22 gion comprised of each Western Balkans country
23 and any European Union member country that
24 shares a border with a Western Balkans country (re-

ferred to in this subsection as the “Western Balkans region”) in accordance with this subsection.

(2) INITIATIVE ELEMENTS.—The initiative authorized under paragraph (1) shall—

(A) promote private sector growth and competitiveness and increase the capacity of businesses, particularly small and medium-sized enterprises, in the Western Balkans region;

(B) seek to increase intraregional exports to countries in the Balkans and European Union member states;

(C) advance opportunities to increase United States exports to, and investments in, countries in the Balkans;

(D) support startup companies in the Western Balkans region by—

(i) providing training in business skills and leadership;

(ii) providing opportunities to connect to sources of capital; and

(iii) encouraging startup companies that are led by youth or women;

(E) encourage and promote inward and outward trade and investment through engage-

1 ment with the Western Balkans diaspora com-
2 munity in the United States and abroad;

3 (F) provide assistance to the governments
4 and civil society organizations of Western Bal-
5 kans countries, through an inclusive process in-
6 corporating the input of local private sector and
7 civil society stakeholders, to develop—

8 (i) regulations to ensure fair, trans-
9 parent, and effective investment; and

10 (ii) economic security policies, such as
11 foreign direct investment screening mecha-
12 nisms and anti-coercion initiatives, to iden-
13 tify and counter corrosive and malign in-
14 vestments and use of economic coercion by
15 foreign countries potentially in the areas of
16 critical infrastructure, critical technologies,
17 dual use items, media, supply of critical in-
18 puts, and access to sensitive information
19 and data;

20 (G) review existing assistance program-
21 ming relating to the Western Balkans across
22 Federal agencies—

23 (i) to eliminate duplication; and

24 (ii) to identify areas of coordination
25 within the Western Balkans region;

1 (H) identify areas where application of ad-
2 ditional resources could expand successful pro-
3 grams to 1 or more countries in the Western
4 Balkans region by building on the existing expe-
5 rience and program architecture;

6 (I) compare existing single-country sector
7 analyses to determine areas of focus that would
8 benefit from a regional approach with respect to
9 the Western Balkans region; and

10 (J) promote intraregional trade throughout
11 the Western Balkans region through—

12 (i) programming, including grants, co-
13 operative agreements, and other forms of
14 assistance;

15 (ii) expanding awareness of the avail-
16 ability of loans and other financial instru-
17 ments from the United States Government,
18 including from the United States Inter-
19 national Development Finance Corporation
20 and the Export-Import Bank of the United
21 States; and

22 (iii) coordinating access to existing
23 trade instruments available through allies
24 and partners in the Western Balkans re-

1 gion, including the European Union and
2 international financial institutions.

3 (3) SUPPORT FOR REGIONAL INFRASTRUCTURE
4 PROJECTS.—The initiative authorized under para-
5 graph (1), consistent with the BUILD Act of 2018
6 (division F of Public Law 115–254) and the Euro-
7 pean Energy Security and Diversification Act of
8 2019 (title XX of division P of Public Law 116–94),
9 should facilitate and prioritize support for regional
10 infrastructure projects, including—

11 (A) transportation projects that build
12 roads, bridges, railways and other physical in-
13 frastructure to facilitate travel of goods and
14 people throughout the Western Balkans region,
15 particularly international travel;

16 (B) technical support and investments
17 needed to meet United States and European
18 Union standards for air travel, including
19 screening and information sharing;

20 (C) the development of telecommunications
21 networks from trusted providers;

22 (D) infrastructure projects that connect
23 Western Balkan countries to each other and to
24 countries with which they share a border;

1 (E) the effective analysis of tenders and
2 transparent procurement processes;

3 (F) investment transparency programs
4 that will help countries in the Western Balkans
5 analyze gaps and establish institutional and
6 regulatory reforms necessary—

7 (i) to create an enabling environment
8 for trade and investment; and

9 (ii) to strengthen protections against
10 suspect investments through public pro-
11 curement and privatization and through
12 foreign direct investments;

13 (G) sharing best practices learned from the
14 United States and other international partners
15 to ensure that institutional and regulatory
16 mechanisms for addressing these issues are fair,
17 nonarbitrary, effective, and free from corrup-
18 tion;

19 (H) projects that reduce reliance on fossil
20 fuels and facilitate the transition to clean
21 sources of energy;

22 (I) technical assistance and generating pri-
23 vate investment in projects that promote
24 connectivity and energy-sharing in the Western
25 Balkans region;

1 (J) technical assistance to support regional
2 collaboration on environmental protection that
3 includes governmental, political, civic, and busi-
4 ness stakeholders; and

5 (K) technical assistance to develop financ-
6 ing options and help create linkages with poten-
7 tial financing institutions and investors.

8 (4) LOANS.—

9 (A) IN GENERAL.—Amounts appropriated
10 under the headings ECONOMIC SUPPORT FUND
11 and ASSISTANCE FOR EUROPE, EURASIA AND
12 CENTRAL ASIA in any Act making appropria-
13 tions for the Department of State, foreign oper-
14 ations, and related programs may be made
15 available for the costs (as defined in section
16 502 of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974
17 (2 U.S.C. 661a)), of loan guarantees, including
18 the cost of modifying loans and loan guaran-
19 tees, for programs, projects, or activities in any
20 Western Balkans country, which are authorized
21 to be provided.

22 (B) CLASSIFICATION OF LOANS AND LOAN
23 GUARANTEES.—Amounts made available under
24 subparagraph (A) for the costs of loans and
25 loan guarantees, including the cost of modifying

1 loans and loan guarantees, shall not be consid-
2 ered assistance for the purposes of any provi-
3 sions of law limiting assistance to a country.

4 (C) CONSULTATION AND NOTIFICATION.—
5 Amounts made available under this subsection
6 shall be subject to—

7 (i) prior consultation with the appro-
8 priate congressional committees; and

9 (ii) the regular notification procedures
10 of the Committee on Appropriations of the
11 Senate and the Committee on Appropria-
12 tions of the House of Representatives.

13 (5) REQUIREMENTS.—All programming under
14 the initiative authorized under paragraph (1) shall—

15 (A) be open to the participation of each
16 Western Balkan country;

17 (B) be consistent with European Union ac-
18 cession requirements;

19 (C) be focused on retaining talent within
20 the Western Balkans;

21 (D) promote government policies in West-
22 ern Balkan countries that encourage free and
23 fair competition, sound governance, environ-
24 mental protection, and business environments

1 that are conducive to sustainable and inclusive
2 economic growth;

3 (E) include gender analysis and efforts to
4 promote gender equity;

5 (F) include a public diplomacy strategy to
6 inform local and regional audiences in the
7 Western Balkans region about the initiative, in-
8 cluding specific programs and projects; and

9 (G) support the Western Balkans countries
10 in meeting international commitments agreed to
11 by the European Union on clean energy and en-
12 ergy security goals.

13 (d) UNITED STATES INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT
14 FINANCE CORPORATION.—

15 (1) APPOINTMENTS.—Not later than 1 year
16 after the date of the enactment of this Act, subject
17 to the availability of appropriations, the Chief Exec-
18 utive Officer of the United States International De-
19 velopment Finance Corporation, in collaboration
20 with the Secretary of State, should take steps to en-
21 sure that—

22 (A) a regional office of the United States
23 International Development Finance Corporation
24 with responsibilities for the Western Balkans is

1 established and operational in the Western Bal-
2 kans region; and

3 (B) sufficient full-time employees of the
4 United States International Development Fi-
5 nance Corporation, including at least 1 perma-
6 nent hire from the United States, are stationed
7 in the regional office to serve United States in-
8 terests in the Western Balkans.

9 (2) REPORT.—Not later than 180 days after
10 the date of the enactment of this Act, the Chief Ex-
11 ecutive Officer of the United States International
12 Development Finance Corporation shall submit a re-
13 port to the appropriate congressional committees
14 that includes—

15 (A) a summary of the steps that have been
16 taken to fulfill the requirements under para-
17 graph (1);

18 (B) an account of any additional resources
19 and authorities needed to complete the require-
20 ments under paragraph (1); and

21 (C) a description of the initial outreach
22 plan for the new regional office of the United
23 States International Development Finance Cor-
24 poration.

1 (3) JOINT REPORT.—Not later than 180 days
2 after the date of the enactment of this Act, the
3 Chief Executive Officer of the United States Inter-
4 national Development Finance Corporation, the Sec-
5 retary of State, and the Administrator of the United
6 States Agency for International Development shall
7 submit a joint report to the appropriate congres-
8 sional committees that includes—

9 (A) an assessment of the benefits of pro-
10 viding sovereign loan guarantees to countries in
11 the Western Balkans to support infrastructure
12 and energy diversification projects;

13 (B) an outline of additional resources, such
14 as tools, funding, and personnel, which may be
15 required to offer sovereign loan guarantees; and

16 (C) an assessment of how the United
17 States International Development Finance Cor-
18 poration can deploy its insurance products in
19 support of bonds or other instruments issued to
20 raise capital through United States financial
21 markets.

22 **SEC. 8. COUNTERING MALIGN INFLUENCE AND PRO-**
23 **MOTING CROSS-CULTURAL ENGAGEMENT.**

24 (a) SENSE OF CONGRESS.—It is the sense of Con-
25 gress that—

1 (1) promoting university partnerships in the
2 Western Balkans, particularly in traditionally under-
3 served communities, advances United States foreign
4 policy goals and requires a whole of government ap-
5 proach, including the utilization of public-private
6 partnerships;

7 (2) such university partnerships would provide
8 opportunities for exchanging academic ideas, tech-
9 nical expertise, research, and cultural understanding
10 for the benefit of the United States; and

11 (3) the 6 countries in the Western Balkans
12 meet the requirements under section 105(c)(4) of
13 the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 (22 U.S.C.
14 2151c(c)(4)).

15 (b) UNIVERSITY PARTNERSHIPS.—The President,
16 working through the Secretary of State, is authorized to
17 provide assistance, consistent with section 105 of the For-
18 eign Assistance Act of 1961 (22 U.S.C. 2151c), to pro-
19 mote the establishment of university partnerships between
20 the United States and the Western Balkans, including—

21 (1) supporting research and analysis on foreign
22 policy, cyber resilience, economic resilience, and
23 disinformation;

24 (2) working with partner governments to re-
25 form policies, improve curricula, strengthen data

1 systems, train teachers, and provide quality, inclu-
2 sive learning materials;

3 (3) providing individuals, particularly at-risk
4 youth, women, people with disabilities, and other
5 vulnerable, marginalized, or underserved commu-
6 nities, with relevant education, training, and skills
7 for meaningful employment;

8 (4) removing barriers to entering formal edu-
9 cation for out-of-school individuals, assisting such
10 individuals to stay in school, and providing an op-
11 portunity for any individuals left behind to catch up
12 on schooling;

13 (5) promoting teaching and research exchanges
14 between institutions of higher education in the West-
15 ern Balkans and in the United States; and

16 (6) encouraging alliances and exchanges with
17 like-minded institutions of education within the
18 Western Balkans and the larger European continent.

19 (c) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There
20 are authorized to be appropriated such sums as may be
21 necessary for each of the fiscal years 2024 through 2028
22 to carry out this section.

23 **SEC. 9. PEACE CORPS IN THE WESTERN BALKANS.**

24 (a) SENSE OF CONGRESS.—It is the sense of Con-
25 gress that—

1 (1) the Peace Corps should be reinstated in the
2 Western Balkans by reopening Peace Corps pro-
3 grams in as many Western Balkans countries as
4 safely possible, including where the Peace Corps had
5 previously operated, or has suspended operations due
6 to the COVID–19 pandemic;

7 (2) the Peace Corps should reopen its programs
8 in as many of the Western Balkans countries as pos-
9 sible, including where the Peace Corps operated pre-
10 viously, but later suspended operations; and

11 (3) the Peace Corps, whose mission is to pro-
12 mote world peace and friendship, in part by helping
13 the people of interested countries in meeting their
14 need for trained men and women, provides an in-
15 valuable opportunity to connect the people of the
16 United States with the people of the Western Bal-
17 kans.

18 (b) REPORT.—Not later than 180 days after the date
19 of the enactment of this Act, the Director of the Peace
20 Corps shall submit a report to the appropriate congres-
21 sional committees that includes—

22 (1) an analysis of current opportunities for
23 Peace Corps expansion in the Western Balkans re-
24 gion; and

1 (2) a plan and timeline for implementing the
2 outcomes described in subsection (a) to facilitate ex-
3 pansion of Peace Corps presence in the Western
4 Balkans region, as appropriate.

5 **SEC. 10. BALKANS YOUTH LEADERSHIP INITIATIVE.**

6 (a) SENSE OF CONGRESS.—It is the sense of Con-
7 gress that regular people-to-people exchange programs
8 that bring religious leaders, journalists, civil society mem-
9 bers, politicians, and other individuals from the Western
10 Balkans to the United States will strengthen existing rela-
11 tionships and advance United States interests and shared
12 values in the Western Balkans region.

13 (b) AUTHORIZATION.—The Secretary of State shall
14 further develop and implement a program, which shall be
15 known as the “Balkans Youth Leadership Initiative” (re-
16 ferred to in this section as “BOLD”) that promotes edu-
17 cational and professional development for young adult
18 leaders and professionals in the Western Balkans who
19 have demonstrated a passion to contribute to the contin-
20 ued development of the Western Balkans region.

21 (c) CONDUCT OF INITIATIVE.—The goals of BOLD
22 shall be—

23 (1) to build the capacity of young Balkan lead-
24 ers in the Western Balkans in the areas of business
25 and information technology, cyber security and

1 digitization, agriculture, civic engagement, and pub-
 2 lic administration;

3 (2) to support young Balkan leaders by offering
 4 professional development, training, and networking
 5 opportunities, particularly in the areas of leadership,
 6 innovation, civic engagement, elections, human
 7 rights, entrepreneurship, good governance, and pub-
 8 lic administration;

9 (3) to support young political, parliamentary,
 10 and civic Balkan leaders in collaboration on regional
 11 initiatives related to good governance, environmental
 12 protection, government ethics, and minority inclu-
 13 sion; and

14 (4) to provide increased economic and technical
 15 assistance to young Balkan leaders to promote eco-
 16 nomic growth and strengthen ties between busi-
 17 nesses in the United States and in the Western Bal-
 18 kans.

19 (d) FELLOWSHIPS.—Under BOLD, the Secretary of
 20 State shall award fellowships to young leaders from the
 21 Western Balkans who—

22 (1) are between 25 and 35 years of age;

23 (2) have demonstrated strong capabilities in en-
 24 trepreneurship, innovation, public service, and lead-
 25 ership;

1 (3) have had a positive impact in their commu-
2 nities, organizations, or institutions, including by
3 promoting cross-regional and multiethnic coopera-
4 tion; and

5 (4) represent a cross-section of gender, re-
6 gional, and ethnic diversity.

7 (e) PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT CENTER.—Under BOLD,
8 the Secretary of State may seek to procure space, hire
9 staff, and develop programming for the establishment of
10 a flagship public engagement and leadership center in the
11 Western Balkans that seeks—

12 (1) to counter disinformation and malign influ-
13 ence;

14 (2) to promote cross-cultural engagement;

15 (3) to provide training for young leaders from
16 the Western Balkans described in subsection (d);
17 and

18 (4) to harmonize the efforts of existing venues
19 throughout the Western Balkans established by the
20 Office of American Spaces.

21 (f) BRIEFING ON CERTAIN EXCHANGE PROGRAMS.—

22 (1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 180 days
23 after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Sec-
24 retary of State, acting through the Assistant Sec-
25 retary of State for Educational and Cultural Affairs,

1 shall provide a briefing to the appropriate congres-
2 sional committees that describes the status of ex-
3 change programs involving the Western Balkans re-
4 gion.

5 (2) ELEMENTS.—The briefing required under
6 paragraph (1) shall—

7 (A) assess the factors constraining the
8 number and frequency of participants from
9 Western Balkans countries in the International
10 Visitor Leadership Program of the Department
11 of State;

12 (B) identify the resources that are nec-
13 essary to address the factors described in sub-
14 paragraph (A); and

15 (C) describe a strategy for connecting
16 alumni and participants of professional develop-
17 ment exchange programs of the Department of
18 State in the Western Balkans with alumni and
19 participants from other countries in Europe, to
20 enhance inter-region and intra-region people-to-
21 people ties.

22 (g) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There
23 are authorized to be appropriated such sums as may be
24 necessary for each of the fiscal years 2024 through 2028
25 to carry out this section.

1 **SEC. 11. SUPPORTING CYBERSECURITY AND CYBER RESIL-**
2 **IENCE IN THE WESTERN BALKANS.**

3 (a) SENSE OF CONGRESS.—It is the sense of Con-
4 gress that—

5 (1) United States support for cyber security,
6 cyber resilience, and secure ICT infrastructure in
7 Western Balkans countries will strengthen the re-
8 gion’s ability to defend itself from and respond to
9 malicious cyber activity conducted by nonstate actors
10 and foreign actors, including foreign governments
11 that seek to influence the region;

12 (2) insecure ICT networks that are vulnerable
13 to manipulation can increase opportunities for—

14 (A) the spread of disinformation; and

15 (B) disrupting or disabling critical infra-
16 structure, including energy, telecommuni-
17 cations, water, health, finance, and other infra-
18 structure that provides essential services to citi-
19 zens;

20 (3) the spread of disinformation is a
21 transnational threat; and

22 (4) it is in the national security interest of the
23 United States to support the cyber security and
24 cyber resilience of Western Balkans countries.

25 (b) REPORT ON DIGITAL ECOSYSTEMS.—Not later
26 than 1 year after the date of the enactment of this Act,

1 the Administrator of the United States Agency for Inter-
2 national Development shall submit to the appropriate con-
3 gressional committees a Digital Ecosystem Country As-
4 sessment for each Western Balkans country that did not
5 undergo a Digital Ecosystem Country Assessment before
6 the date of the enactment of this Act.

7 (c) INTERAGENCY REPORT ON CYBER SECURITY AND
8 CYBER RESILIENCE IN WESTERN BALKANS COUN-
9 TRIES.—Not later than 1 year after the date of the enact-
10 ment of this Act, the Secretary of State, in coordination
11 with the Secretary of Defense, the Secretary of Homeland
12 Security, and other relevant Federal Government agencies,
13 shall submit a report to the appropriate congressional
14 committees that contains—

15 (1) an overview of interagency efforts to
16 strengthen cyber security and cyber resilience efforts
17 in Western Balkans countries;

18 (2) a strategy to better strengthen the cyber se-
19 curity and cyber resilience of each Western Balkans
20 country;

21 (3) a review of existing United States Govern-
22 ment cyber security initiatives that—

23 (A) counter disinformation in Western Bal-
24 kans countries;

1 (B) strengthen ICT infrastructure and
2 cyber security capacity in the Western Balkans;
3 and

4 (C) support democracy and internet free-
5 dom in Western Balkans countries;

6 (4) an assessment of cyber threat information
7 sharing between the United States and Western Bal-
8 kans countries;

9 (5) an assessment of options for the United
10 States to better support cyber security and cyber re-
11 silience in Western Balkans countries, including the
12 posting of cyber professionals to United States diplo-
13 matic posts in Western Balkans countries and pro-
14 viding relevant training, such as technical capacity
15 building and response and recovery efforts to For-
16 eign Service Officers; and

17 (6) a determination of United States additional
18 support needed for the cyber security and cyber re-
19 silience Albania, Montenegro, North Macedonia, and
20 Croatia, which are NATO allies.

21 **SEC. 12. SENSE OF CONGRESS REGARDING AN INTERIM**
22 **AGREEMENT.**

23 It is the sense of Congress that—

24 (1) the Agreement on the Path to Normaliza-
25 tion of Relations, which was agreed to by Kosovo

1 and Serbia on February 27, 2023, with the facilita-
2 tion of the European Union, is a positive step for-
3 ward in advancing normalization between the 2
4 countries;

5 (2) Serbia and Kosovo should seek to make im-
6 mediate progress on the Implementation Annex to
7 the agreement referred to in paragraph (1);

8 (3) the Department of State shall provide to
9 the appropriate congressional committees an evalua-
10 tion of each country's progress on the Implementa-
11 tion Annex referred to in paragraph (2);

12 (4) the United States should not consider ad-
13 vancing the initiatives referred to in this Act to such
14 country until sufficient progress has been made on
15 the Implementation Annex;

16 (5) once sufficient progress has been made on
17 the Implementation Annex, the United States should
18 consider advancing additional initiatives to strength-
19 en bilateral relations with both countries, which
20 could include—

21 (A) establishing bilateral strategic dia-
22 logues; and

23 (B) advancing concrete initiatives to deep-
24 en trade and investment with both countries;
25 and

1 (6) the United States should continue to sup-
2 port a comprehensive final agreement between
3 Kosovo and Serbia based on mutual recognition.

4 **SEC. 13. SUNSET.**

5 Sections 5 and 6 of this Act shall cease to be effective
6 on the date that is 10 years after the date of the enact-
7 ment of this Act.

