

### 117TH CONGRESS 1ST SESSION

# S. 2912

To strengthen United States oversight of the Biological Weapons Convention and to advance non-proliferation objectives related to biological weapons, dual-use technologies, and life sciences research, and for other purposes.

# IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

September 30, 2021

Mr. RISCH introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations

# A BILL

- To strengthen United States oversight of the Biological Weapons Convention and to advance non-proliferation objectives related to biological weapons, dual-use technologies, and life sciences research, and for other purposes.
  - 1 Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-
  - 2 tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,
  - 3 SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.
  - 4 This Act may be cited as the "Biological Weapons
  - 5 Policy Act of 2021".
  - 6 SEC. 2. DEFINITIONS.
  - 7 In this Act:

1	(1) Appropriate congressional commit-
2	TEES.—The term "appropriate congressional com-
3	mittees" means—
4	(A) the Committee on Foreign Relations
5	and the Committee on Appropriations of the
6	Senate; and
7	(B) the Committee on Foreign Affairs and
8	the Committee on Appropriations Armed Serv-
9	ices of the House of Representatives.
10	(2) BIOLOGICAL WEAPONS CONVENTION.—The
11	term "Biological Weapons Convention" means the
12	Convention on the Prohibition of the Development,
13	Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological and
14	Toxin Weapons and on their Destruction, done at
15	Washington, London, and Moscow, April 10, 1972.
16	(3) Life sciences research.—The term "life
17	sciences research"—
18	(A) means research that pertains to living
19	organisms, including microbes, human beings,
20	animals, and plants, and their products, includ-
21	ing all disciplines and methodologies of biology
22	such as aerobiology, agricultural science, plant
23	science, animal science, bioinformatics,
24	genomics, proteomics, synthetic biology, envi-

ronmental science, public health, modeling, en-

- gineering of living systems, and all applications
  of the biological sciences; and
- 3 (B) is meant to encompass the diverse ap-4 proaches for understanding life at the level of 5 ecosystems, organisms, organs, tissues, cells, 6 and molecules.

## 7 SEC. 3. FINDINGS.

- Congress makes the following findings:
  - (1) According to the Department of State, "promoting global health security is a core tenant of the U.S. biodefense strategy because infectious disease threats, whether naturally occurring, deliberate, or accidental, have the potential to spread globally and affect the American people and interests".
    - (2) Several countries around the world have known or suspected chemical and biological weapons capability or are undertaking research that poses concerns about such nations' compliance with the Biological Weapons Convention, as documented by the United States Department of State and the United Nations.
    - (3) With respect to the Russian Federation, the Department of State, in its 2021 report on Adherence to and Compliance With Arms Control, Non-proliferation, and Disarmament Agreements and

- Commitments, assessed that "the Russian Federation (Russia) maintains an offensive BW [biological weapons] program and is in violation of its obligation under Articles I and II of the BWC [Biological Weapons Convention]".
  - (4) With respect to the People's Republic of China, the Department of State, also in its 2021 report on Adherence to and Compliance With Arms Control, Nonproliferation, and Disarmament Agreements and Commitments, assessed that it "engaged in activities with dual-use applications, which raise concerns regarding its compliance with Article I of the BWC. In addition, the United States does not have sufficient information to determine whether China eliminated its assessed historical biological warfare (BW) program, as required under Article II of the Convention."
    - (5) The People's Republic of China's engagement in biological research that presents dual use concerns, its professed prioritization of biotechnology and synthetic biology in relevant national strategies, and evidence that emerged in the midst of the COVID–19 pandemic of collaboration between ostensibly civilian research laboratories in the People's Republic of China and the People's Liberation

- Army, has highlighted the imperative of the United States to monitor closely and conduct diligent oversight of biological research collaboration with the People's Republic of China.
  - (6) Another consideration in the imperative for closer oversight is the People's Republic of China's prioritization of military-civil fusion, which systematically harnesses all civil and commercial research and technology for potential weapons use.
  - (7) A potential bioweapons attack or accidental leak of biological research, especially biological research that could be militarized, would have devastating human health, economic, and geopolitical consequences. While the origins of COVID–19 remain under investigation, the current pandemic serves as a sobering example of vulnerability and could inspire malign actors.
  - (8) The Department of State, particularly the Under Secretary of State for Arms Control and International Security, is responsible for "developing measures to prevent misuse of advances in the life sciences" (1 FAM 457.3). These challenges require that the Department of State have the lead role in preventing the proliferation of bioweapons and in strengthening relevant oversight mechanisms to miti-

gate the potential risk of a deliberate or accidental bioweapons event.

### 3 SEC. 4. STATEMENT OF POLICY.

- It shall be the policy of the United States to—
  - (1) conduct rigorous oversight of public health research and innovation that could be weaponized or serve a dual-use function, and incorporate national security and nonproliferation considerations and country-specific conditions into decisions regarding international biological, bacteriological, virological, and other relevant research collaboration;
  - (2) ensure that United States Government support for public health research and other actions are not inadvertently contributing to the proliferation of biological weapons and dual use technologies in the search for solutions to pressing global health challenges; and
  - (3) declassify, to the maximum extent possible, all intelligence relevant to the People's Republic of China's (PRC) compliance or lack of compliance with its obligations under the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC), and other national security concerns regarding PRC life sciences research that falls outside the scope of the BWC.

	1	SEC. 5.	<b>AMENDMENTS</b>	TO	SECRETARY	OF	STATE	<b>AUTHOR</b>
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- TIES.
- 3 (a) Research, Development, and Other Stud-
- 4 IES.—Section 301(a) of the Arms Control and Disar-
- 5 mament Act (22 U.S.C. 2571(a)) is amended by inserting
- 6 "biological, virological," after "bacteriological".
- 7 (b) Oversight of Dual-Use Research.—Title III
- 8 of the Arms Control and Disarmament Act (22 U.S.C.
- 9 2571 et seq.) is amended by inserting after section 301
- 10 (22 U.S.C. 2571) the following new section:
- 11 "SEC. 301A. AUTHORITIES WITH RESPECT TO BIOLOGICAL
- 12 DUAL-USE RESEARCH OF CONCERN.
- "(a) Oversight of Dual-Use Research.—
- "(1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of State,
- working through Chiefs of Mission in each country
- listed in paragraph (2), as applicable, shall lead the
- 17 conduct and completion of a Country Team Assess-
- ment to evaluate and determine whether, for each
- discrete proposed research project or other collabora-
- 20 tion funded or otherwise supported by the United
- 21 States Government that involves life sciences dual-
- use research of concern, including research related
- to biological agents, toxins, and pathogens, aligns
- with the national interests of the United States. The
- Country Team Assessment shall be submitted to the
- 26 Secretary of State and the head of the Federal de-

1 partment or agency sponsoring the proposed re-2 search or collaboration. "(2) List of countries specified.—The 3 4 countries for which a Country Team Assessment, as 5 described in paragraph (1), must be completed are 6 as follows: 7 "(A) The People's Republic of China. 8 "(B) The Russian Federation. 9 "(C) The Islamic Republic of Iran. "(D) The Democratic People's Republic of 10 Korea. 11 12 "(E) The Syrian Arab Republic. 13 "(F) Any other country specified in the re-14 port assessing compliance with the Biological 15 Weapons Convention, as required by section 16 403(a) of the Arms Control and Disarmament 17 Act (22 U.S.C. 2593a(a)) in the relevant cal-18 endar year. 19 "(b) Report on Approvals of Collaboration.— Not later than September 30, 2022, and annually there-20 21 after for a period of three years, the Secretary of State, in consultation with the heads of other relevant Federal 23 departments and agencies as appropriate, shall submit to the appropriate committees of Congress a report describ-

ing any research or collaboration described in subsection

- 1 (a) that was approved and the justification for such ap-
- 2 proval.
- 3 "(c) Report on Efficacy of Country Team As-
- 4 SESSMENT.—Not later than September 30, 2025, the Sec-
- 5 retary of State, in coordination with the heads of other
- 6 relevant Federal departments and agencies, shall submit
- 7 to the appropriate committees of Congress a report that
- 8 includes the following elements:
- 9 "(1) A summary of the work of the relevant
- 10 country teams over the previous three years.
- 11 "(2) An assessment of whether the country
- team assessment process described in subsection (a)
- is effective in advancing relevant national interests
- of the United States, and any associated rec-
- ommendations.
- 16 "(3) Any other key findings and recommenda-
- tions, including for conducting oversight of and im-
- proving interagency coordination on the review and
- monitoring of collaboration with other countries on
- 20 life sciences research.
- 21 "(d) Definitions.—In this section:
- 22 "(1) Appropriate committees of con-
- 23 GRESS.—the term 'appropriate committees of Con-
- 24 gress' means—

1	"(A) the Committee on Foreign Relations
2	and the Committee on Health, Education,
3	Labor, and Pensions of the Senate; and
4	"(B) the Committee on Foreign Affairs
5	and the Committee on Energy and Commerce
6	of the House of Representatives.
7	"(2) Life sciences dual-use research of
8	CONCERN DEFINED.—The term 'life sciences dual-
9	use research of concern' means life sciences research
10	that can be reasonably anticipated to provide knowl-
11	edge, information, products, or technologies that
12	could be directly misapplied to pose a significant
13	threat with broad potential consequences to public
14	health and safety, national security, or agricultural
15	crops and other plants, animals, the environment, or
16	materiel.".
17	(c) Enhancements to the Annual Compliance
18	Report.—Section 403(a) of the Arms Control and Disar-
19	mament Act (22 U.S.C. 2593a(a)) is amended—
20	(1) in paragraph (5)—
21	(A) by inserting "or the conduct of life
22	sciences research of dual-use concern (as de-
23	fined in section 301A)," before "including—";
24	and

1	(B) in subparagraph (C), by striking ";
2	and" and inserting a semicolon;
3	(2) by redesignating paragraph (6) as para-
4	graph (7); and
5	(3) by inserting after paragraph (5) the fol-
6	lowing new paragraph:
7	"(6) a detailed assessment of the national secu-
8	rity and proliferation risk of life science research of
9	dual-use concern conducted by the other nations in-
10	cluding—
11	"(A) a review of major issues the Depart-
12	ment of State is prioritizing with respect to the
13	misuse or potential misuse of life sciences re-
14	search;
15	"(B) a description of all efforts by the De-
16	partment of State and other relevant depart-
17	ments and agencies to develop and promote
18	measures to prevent misuse or proliferation of
19	advances in the life sciences;
20	"(C) an assessment of national level poli-
21	cies, research initiatives, or other relevant ef-
22	forts focused on increasing the pathogenicity,
23	contagiousness, or transmissibility of viruses or
24	bacteria, including initiatives involving or an-

1	ticipated to involve enhanced potential pan-
2	demic pathogens of other nations, including—
3	"(i) the People's Republic of China;
4	"(ii) the Russian Federation;
5	"(iii) the Islamic Republic of Iran;
6	"(iv) the Democratic People's Repub-
7	lic of Korea;
8	"(v) the Syrian Arab Republic;
9	"(vi) any other nation identified in
10	paragraphs (4) and (5); and
11	"(vii) any terrorist group or malign
12	non-state actor;
13	"(D) an assessment of whether any of the
14	activities described in subparagraph (C) con-
15	stitute violations of Biological Weapons Conven-
16	tion or pose related national security concerns;
17	"(E) a description of collaboration between
18	ostensibly civilian entities, including research
19	laboratories, and military entities on life
20	sciences research;
21	"(F) a description of the confidence-build-
22	ing measures or other attempts by the countries
23	described in subparagraph (C) to justify, clar-
24	ify, or explain the activities described in such
25	subparagraph;

1	"(G) an assessment of risks to United
2	States national security and proliferation risks
3	presented by the initiatives described in sub-
4	paragraph (C);
5	"(H) a description of all involvement by
6	the Department of State to review United
7	States Government funding or other support,
8	including subgrants, for life sciences research in
9	other countries that qualifies as dual-use re-
10	search of concern, including research related to
11	biological agents, toxins, and pathogens; and
12	"(I) a description of all participation in
13	any other United States Government and inter-
14	national groups on biosecurity and dual-use re-
15	search;";
16	(4) in paragraph (7), as redesignated by para-
17	graph (2) of this subsection, by striking the period
18	at the end and inserting "; and; and
19	(5) by adding at the end the following new
20	paragraph:
21	"(8) a description of any obstacles or challenges
22	to the ability of United States Government to ad-
23	dress the requirements specified in this section, in-
24	cluding a description of gaps in authorities, intel-

1	ligence collection and analysis, organizational re-
2	sponsibilities, and resources.".
3	SEC. 6. REPORT ON UNITED STATES FUNDING FOR LIFE
4	SCIENCE RESEARCH IN THE PEOPLE'S RE-
5	PUBLIC OF CHINA.
6	(a) In General.—Not later than 180 days after the
7	date of the enactment of this Act, the President shall con-
8	duct a formal review, and produce a written report, of all
9	United States Government grants or funding awarded in
10	the past ten years for research collaboration with the Peo-
11	ple's Republic of China related to life sciences, gain-of-
12	function, synthetic biology, biotechnology, or other re-
13	search areas that pose potential biological weapons pro-
14	liferation or dual-use concerns.
15	(b) Elements.—The review required under sub-
16	section (a) shall analyze—
17	(1) all such grants and funding requests that
18	were awarded and a detailed project description, the
19	awardee, the amount awarded, any resulting sub-
20	grants to entities under the jurisdiction of the Peo-
21	ple's Republic of China, and the criteria met for
22	granting approval of funding;
23	(2) the exact procedures used to approve or
24	deny such grants or other funding, including coordi-
25	nation, if any, between agencies responsible for pub-

- lic health preparedness and biomedical research, including the Department of Health and Human Services, and national security agencies, including the Department of State;
  - (3) an assessment of any gaps in United States Government procedures and safeguards to prevent any such research intended for civilian purposes from being diverted for military research in the People's Republic of China;
    - (4) an assessment of how to best address any such gaps in procedures and safeguards, especially regarding greater interagency input from national security agencies, particularly the Department of State;
    - (5) how the research conducted with the grants and funding requests listed pursuant to paragraph(1) may have contributed to the development of biological weapons in the People's Republic of China;
    - (6) how the United States Government's understanding of the People's Republic of China's "military-civil fusion" national strategy informed and impacted funding decisions, and how it will inform future funding decisions in research related to gain-of-function, synthetic biology, biotechnology, or other

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1	research areas that pose biological weapons pro-
2	liferation or dual-use concerns;
3	(7) whether any United States Government
4	funding, including subgrants, was used to support
5	gain-of-function research in the People's Republic of
6	China during the United States moratorium on such
7	research from 2014 to 2017;
8	(8) steps taken the by United States Govern-
9	ment, if any, to apply additional scrutiny to United
10	States Government funding, including subgrants, to
11	support gain-of-function research in the People's Re-
12	public of China after the United States Government
13	lifted the moratorium on gain-of-function research in
14	2017; and
15	(9) any other relevant matter discovered during
16	the course of the review.
17	(c) Report Submission.—Within 15 days of the
18	completion of the report required under subsection (a), the
19	President shall submit the report to—
20	(1) the Committee on Foreign Relations of the
21	Senate;
22	(2) the Committee on Health, Education,
23	Labor, and Pensions of the Senate;
24	(3) the Committee on Armed Services of the
25	Senate;

1	(4) the Committee on Foreign Affairs of the
2	House of Representatives;
3	(5) the Committee on Energy and Commerce of
4	the House of Representatives; and
5	(6) the Committee on Armed Services of the
6	House of Representatives.
7	(d) Form of Report.—The report shall be unclassi-
8	fied, but may include a classified annex.
9	SEC. 7. GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY OFFICE REPORT
10	ON OVERSIGHT OF INTERNATIONAL LIFE
11	SCIENCES RESEARCH COLLABORATION.
12	(a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than one year after the
13	date of the enactment of this Act, the Comptroller General
14	of the United States shall submit a report to the appro-
15	priate congressional committees on the following matters:
16	(1) An audit of United States Government au-
17	thorities, policies, and processes governing coopera-
18	tion with other nations as relates to life sciences re-
19	search that could be weaponized or pose dual-use
20	concerns, such as pathogens or toxins, synthetic biol-
21	ogy, and related emerging technologies, and the de-
22	gree to which these authorities, policies, and proc-
23	esses account for national security, proliferation, and
24	country-specific considerations in decisions on
25	whether to pursue such collaboration.

- 1 (2) An assessment of the degree of coordination 2 between Federal departments and agencies respon-3 sible for public health preparedness and the governance of biomedical research and Federal depart-5 ments and agencies responsible for national security, 6 especially the United States Department of State, to 7 assess and account for security implications of co-8 operation with other nations on life sciences re-9 search.
- 10 (b) Elements.—The review required under sub-11 section (a) shall address the following elements:
  - (1) The Federal department or agencies or other governmental entities that provide funding or other material support for life sciences research, especially biological research, with other nations.
  - (2) The authorities, policies, and processes that currently exist for reviewing, approving, and monitoring grant funding or other material support for biological research with other nations, including a description of all the steps involved reviewing, approving, and monitoring such funding or other support.
  - (3) Which Federal departments and agencies, including specific bureaus and offices, are involved

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- in the authorities, policies, and processes described in paragraph (2).
  - (4) The circumstances under which Federal departments and agencies apply enhanced review, monitoring, and coordination to proposed collaboration, as well as an analysis of the extent to which and how national security, proliferation, or country-specific considerations, such as a nation's adherence to the Biological Weapons Convention, are among the circumstances that trigger enhanced scrutiny of whether the United States Government should fund a particular research program.
    - (5) The information required to be included in an application for United States Government funding of life sciences research to address potential national security, proliferation, or country-specific concerns, and whether the information required varies across departments and agencies.
    - (6) The extent to which Federal departments and agencies with national security responsibilities have visibility into the information described in paragraph (5) prior to an award being made, even if grantees are applying to funding from another Federal department or agency.

- (7) The processes and timeline by which funds 1 2 are issued to the awardee or awardees after a grant 3 or other funding award is made, and to what extent 4 these funds are monitored for national security im-5 plications thereafter, including how Federal depart-6 ments and agencies with national security respon-7 sibilities are involved in monitoring such research 8 after funds are awarded.
- 9 (c) Report Submission.—Within 15 days of the 10 completion of the report required under subsection (a), the 11 President shall submit the report to—
- 12 (1) the Committee on Foreign Relations, the 13 Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pen-14 sions, and the Committee on Armed Services of the 15 Senate; and
- 16 (2) the Committee on Foreign Affairs, the
  17 Committee on Energy and Commerce, and the Com18 mittee on Armed Services of the House of Rep19 resentatives.
- 20 (d) FORM OF REPORT.—The report required under 21 subsection (a) shall be submitted in unclassified form, but 22 may include a classified annex.

1	SEC. 8. PROHIBITION WITH RESPECT TO CERTAIN TYPES
2	OF LIFE SCIENCES RESEARCH.
3	No Federal funds may be obligated or expended for
4	the purpose of conducting research that increases the
5	pathogenicity, contagiousness, or transmissibility of vi-
6	ruses or bacteria, including any research anticipated to in-
7	volve enhanced potential pandemic pathogens, if such re-
8	search involves a foreign entity that is subject to the juris-
9	diction of any of the following countries:
10	(1) The People's Republic of China.
11	(2) The Russian Federation.
12	(3) The Islamic Republic of Iran.
13	(4) The Democratic People's Republic of Korea.
14	(5) The Syrian Arab Republic.
15	(6) Any other country specified in the report
16	assessing compliance with the Biological Weapons
17	Convention, as required by section 403(a) of the
18	Arms Control and Disarmament Act (22 U.S.C.
19	2593a(a)) in the relevant calendar year.
20	SEC. 9. BIOLOGICAL AND TOXIN WEAPONS REVIEW CON-
21	FERENCE.
22	(a) Statement of Policy.—In order to promote
23	international peace, and security, it is the policy of the
24	United States to pursue adherence to the Biological Weap-
25	ons Convention and accountability for violations thereof,
26	including as described in subsections (b) and (c).

- 1 (b) ACTIVITIES IN ADVANCE OF THE NINTH REVIEW
- 2 Conference of the Biological Weapons Conven-
- 3 TION.—Before the Ninth Review Conference of the 1972
- 4 Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Pro-
- 5 duction and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and
- 6 Toxin Weapons and on their Destruction (in this sub-
- 7 section referred to as "the Conference"), the President
- 8 shall carry out the following activities:
- 9 (1) Demand greater transparency from the
- Government of the People's Republic of China re-
- garding the dual-use applications of its life science
- research, which raise concerns regarding its compli-
- ance with Article I of the Biological Weapons Con-
- vention.
- 15 (2) Engage with other governments, the private
- sector (including in relevant life sciences and tech-
- 17 nology fields), and other stakeholders, as appro-
- priate, on United States concerns about the People's
- 19 Republic of China's compliance with the Biological
- Weapons Convention, and the national security, pub-
- 21 lie health, and non-proliferation implications of these
- concerns.
- 23 (3) Emphasize that the People's Republic of
- China's national strategy of "military-civil fusion"
- undermines the underlying utility, purposes, and en-

- 1 forceability of the Biological Weapons Convention,
- which may not adequately capture the full range of
- dual-use biotechnologies being pursued by the Peo-
- 4 ple's Republic of China.
- 5 (c) SECURITY COUNCIL COMPLAINT.—If the ques-
- 6 tions and concerns raised in subsection (b) are not ade-
- 7 quately addressed, the President should consider lodging
- 8 a complaint to the Security Council pursuant to Article
- 9 VI of the Convention.

#### 10 SEC. 10. ANNUAL REPORT BY THE UNITED STATES AGENCY

- 11 FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT.
- 12 (a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 180 days after the
- 13 date of enactment of this Act, and annually thereafter for
- 14 seven years, the Administrator of the United States Inter-
- 15 national Development shall submit to the appropriate con-
- 16 gressional committees a report describing all engagements
- 17 and funding, including subgrants, for life sciences research
- 18 involving or related to the study of pathogens, viruses, and
- 19 toxins provided to entities subject to the jurisdiction of
- 20 countries listed in subsection (b), to include a national se-
- 21 curity justification for such engagements and funding.
- 22 (b) List of Countries Specified.—The countries
- 23 to be covered by the report required in subsection (a) are
- 24 as follows:
- 25 (1) The People's Republic of China.

- 1 (2) The Russian Federation.
- 2 (3) The Islamic Republic of Iran.
- 3 (4) The Democratic People's Republic of Korea.
- 4 (5) The Syrian Arab Republic.
- 5 (6) Any other country specified in the report
- 6 assessing compliance with the Biological Weapons
- 7 Convention, as required by section 403(a) of the
- 8 Arms Control and Disarmament Act (22 U.S.C.
- 9 2593a(a)) in the relevant calendar year.
- 10 (c) FORM.—The report required under subsection (a)
- 11 shall be submitted in unclassified form, but may include
- 12 a classified annex.
- 13 SEC. 11. UNITED NATIONS AGENCIES, PROGRAMS, AND
- 14 FUNDS.
- 15 (a) Prohibition.—The Permanent Representative
- 16 of the United States to the United Nations, in coordina-
- 17 tion with the United States Representative to the World
- 18 Health Assembly, shall use the voice, vote, and influence
- 19 of the United States at the United Nations to bar rep-
- 20 resentatives from countries listed in subsection (b) from
- 21 serving in leadership positions within any United Nations
- 22 specialized agency, program, fund, or treaty organization
- 23 with a nexus to global health (including animal health),
- 24 biosecurity, atomic, biological or chemical weapons, or
- 25 food security and agricultural development.

1	(b) List of Countries Specified.—The countries
2	to be covered by the report required in subsection (a) are
3	as follows:
4	(1) The People's Republic of China.
5	(2) The Russian Federation.
6	(3) The Islamic Republic of Iran.
7	(4) The Democratic People's Republic of Korea.
8	(5) The Syrian Arab Republic.
9	(6) Any other country specified in the report
10	assessing compliance with the Biological Weapons
11	Convention, as required by section 403(a) of the
12	Arms Control and Disarmament Act (22 U.S.C.
13	2593a(a)) in the relevant calendar year.

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