

S. 1580

One Hundred Fifteenth Congress of the United States of America

AT THE SECOND SESSION

*Begun and held at the City of Washington on Wednesday,
the third day of January, two thousand and eighteen*

An Act

To enhance the transparency, improve the coordination, and intensify the impact of assistance to support access to primary and secondary education for displaced children and persons, including women and girls, and for other purposes.

*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 “Protecting Girls’ Access to Education in Vulnerable Settings Act”.

SEC. 2. FINDINGS.

Congress finds the following:

(1) As of June 2018, more than 68,000,000 people have been displaced by disasters and conflicts around the world, the highest number recorded since the end of World War II, of which more than 25,000,000 people are refugees.

(2) More than half of the population of refugees are children and, according to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, nearly 4,000,000 school-aged refugee children lack access to primary education.

(3) Education offers socioeconomic opportunities, psychological stability, and physical protection for displaced people, particularly for women and girls, who might otherwise be vulnerable to severe forms of trafficking in persons (as such term is defined in section 103(9) of the Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000 (22 U.S.C. 7102(9)), child marriage, sexual exploitation, or economic disenfranchisement.

(4) Displaced children face considerable barriers to accessing educational services and, because the duration of such displacement is, on average, 26 years, such children may spend the entirety of their childhood without access to such services.

(5) Despite the rising need for educational services, as of 2016, less than two percent of humanitarian aid was directed toward educational services.

SEC. 3. SENSE OF CONGRESS.

It is the sense of Congress that—

(1) it is critical to ensure that children, particularly girls, displaced by conflicts overseas are able to access educational services because such access can combat extremism and reduce exploitation and poverty; and

(2) the educational needs of vulnerable women and girls should be considered in the design, implementation, and evaluation of related United States foreign assistance policies and programs.

SEC. 4. STATEMENT OF POLICY.

It is the policy of the United States to—

(1) partner with and encourage other countries, public and private multilateral institutions, and nongovernmental and civil society organizations, including faith-based organizations and organizations representing parents and children, to support efforts to ensure that displaced children have access to safe primary and secondary education;

(2) work with donors to enhance training and capacity-building for the governments of countries hosting significant numbers of displaced people to design, implement, and monitor programs to effectively address barriers to such education; and

(3) coordinate with the governments of countries hosting significant numbers of displaced people to—

(A) promote the inclusion of displaced children into the educational systems of such countries; and

(B) in circumstances in which such inclusion is difficult, develop innovative approaches to providing safe primary and secondary educational opportunities, such as encouraging schools to permit children to be educated by extending the hours of schooling or expanding the number of teachers.

SEC. 5. UNITED STATES ASSISTANCE TO SUPPORT EDUCATIONAL SERVICES FOR DISPLACED CHILDREN.

(a) **IN GENERAL.**—The Secretary of State and the Administrator of the United States Agency for International Development are authorized to prioritize and advance ongoing efforts to support programs that—

(1) provide safe primary and secondary education for displaced children;

(2) build the capacity of institutions in countries hosting displaced people to prevent discrimination against displaced children, especially displaced girls, who seek access to such education; and

(3) help increase the access of displaced children, especially displaced girls, to educational, economic, and entrepreneurial opportunities, including through the governmental authorities responsible for educational or youth services in such host countries.

(b) **COORDINATION WITH MULTILATERAL ORGANIZATIONS.**—The Secretary and the Administrator are authorized to coordinate with the World Bank, appropriate agencies of the United Nations, and other relevant multilateral organizations to work with governments in other countries to collect relevant data, disaggregated by age and gender, on the ability of displaced people to access education and participate in economic activity, in order to improve the targeting, monitoring, and evaluation of related assistance efforts.

(c) **COORDINATION WITH PRIVATE SECTOR AND CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATIONS.**—The Secretary and the Administrator are authorized to work with private sector and civil society organizations to promote safe primary and secondary education for displaced children.

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SEC. 6. REPORT.

The Secretary and the Administrator shall include in the report required under section 7 of the READ Act (division A of Public Law 115–56; 22 U.S.C. 2151c note) a description of any primary or secondary educational services supported by programs for natural or manmade disaster relief or response that specifically address the needs of displaced girls.

Speaker of the House of Representatives.

*Vice President of the United States and
President of the Senate.*