

## Calendar No. 454

117<sup>TH</sup> CONGRESS  
2<sup>D</sup> SESSION

# S. 552

To direct the Administrator of the United States Agency for International Development to submit to Congress a report on the impact of the COVID–19 pandemic on global basic education programs.

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### IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

MARCH 2 (legislative day, MARCH 1), 2021

Mr. CARDIN (for himself, Mr. BOOZMAN, Mr. DURBIN, Mr. BOOKER, Mr. CASEY, Mr. VAN HOLLEN, and Ms. COLLINS) introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations

JULY 21, 2022

Reported by Mr. MENENDEZ, with an amendment

[Strike out all after the enacting clause and insert the part printed in *italic*]

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## A BILL

To direct the Administrator of the United States Agency for International Development to submit to Congress a report on the impact of the COVID–19 pandemic on global basic education programs.

1       *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*  
2       *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

1 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

2 This Act may be cited as the “Global Learning Loss  
3 Assessment Act of 2021”.

4 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

5 Congress makes the following findings:

6 (1) Before the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (com-  
7 monly referred to as “COVID-19”) pandemic began,  
8 258,000,000 children were out of school, including  
9 130,000,000 girls.

10 (2) Students already at a disadvantage before  
11 COVID-19 will experience greater learning loss,  
12 thereby worsening inequity and inequality.

13 (3) Approximately 90 percent of the world’s  
14 student population—over 1,600,000,000 children  
15 and youth—have had their education disrupted by  
16 school closure due to COVID-19.

17 (4) School closures lead to interrupted learning,  
18 poor nutrition, gaps in childcare, increased dropout  
19 rates, exposure to violence, and social isolation.

20 (5) Up to 24,000,000 children are at risk of  
21 dropping out of school permanently due to rising lev-  
22 els of child poverty associated with the pandemic.

23 (6) School closure and remote learning is espe-  
24 cially burdensome on girls, who are frequently ex-  
25 pected to shoulder more household chores and re-

1        sponsibilities and are more vulnerable to gender-  
2        based violence.

3        ~~(7) During the Ebola epidemic, nationwide~~  
4        ~~school closures in Sierra Leone in 2014 led to in-~~  
5        ~~creased instances of sexual- and gender-based vio-~~  
6        ~~lence, teenage pregnancy, school dropout, and child~~  
7        ~~labor for girls.~~

8        ~~(8) More than 60 percent of national distance~~  
9        ~~learning alternatives rely exclusively on online plat-~~  
10       ~~forms but two-thirds of the world's school aged chil-~~  
11       ~~dren, or 1,300,000,000 children aged 3 to 17, do not~~  
12       ~~have internet connection in their homes, and schools~~  
13       ~~and local learning centers also frequently have inad-~~  
14       ~~equate internet connectivity. Eighty percent of stu-~~  
15       ~~dents in sub-Saharan Africa lack such access, with~~  
16       ~~an even higher rate for girls.~~

17       ~~(9) Children and youth with disabilities are par-~~  
18       ~~ticularly vulnerable to the health, education, and so-~~  
19       ~~cioeconomic consequences of the pandemic. As a fur-~~  
20       ~~ther challenge, distance learning tools are not always~~  
21       ~~accessible to learners with disabilities or those with~~  
22       ~~complex learning needs, especially in poorer and~~  
23       ~~rural households.~~

24       ~~(10) Before the COVID-19 pandemic, refugee~~  
25       ~~children were twice as likely to be out of school as~~

1 other youth, and school closures and a lack of access  
 2 to distance learning tools threaten to make the edu-  
 3 cation gap among refugee children even more severe.

4 (11) The economic downturn caused by the  
 5 COVID-19 pandemic could lead to an education fi-  
 6 nancing gap of \$77,000,000,000 in low- and middle-  
 7 income countries over the next two years.

8 (12) The economic cost of school closures could  
 9 be up to \$1,337 per student, which on a global scale  
 10 equates to approximately \$10,000,000,000,000 in  
 11 lost economic output over the coming generation.

12 **SEC. 3. STATEMENT OF POLICY.**

13 It is the policy of the United States that United  
 14 States-funded basic education programs operating in for-  
 15 eign countries should—

16 (1) provide inclusive learning opportunities for  
 17 students and teachers, especially for the most mar-  
 18 ginalized, including girls and children with disabil-  
 19 ities, and previously out of school children;

20 (2) build local capacity and help countries  
 21 strengthen their education systems, including oppor-  
 22 tunities for early childhood development;

23 (3) improve the availability, delivery, and qual-  
 24 ity of education services from early childhood  
 25 through secondary education;

1           (4) improve equity and safety in education serv-  
2       ices; and

3           (5) support the return of children to school who  
4       have experienced interruptions in their education  
5       due to the COVID-19 pandemic and work to enroll  
6       previously out-of-school children and youth, particu-  
7       larly the most marginalized.

8   **SEC. 4. REPORT.**

9       (a) **IN GENERAL.**—Not later than 180 days after the  
10   date of the enactment of this Act, the Administrator of  
11   the United States Agency for International Development,  
12   acting through the Senior Coordinator for International  
13   Basic Education Assistance and in consultation with the  
14   Senior Coordinator for Gender Equality and Women’s  
15   Empowerment, shall submit to the appropriate congres-  
16   sional committees a report on the impact of the COVID-  
17   19 pandemic on USAID’s basic education programs.

18       (b) **MATTERS TO BE INCLUDED.**—The report re-  
19   quired under subsection (a) shall include, at a minimum,  
20   the following elements:

21           (1) An assessment of the magnitude of global  
22       learning loss that will result from protracted school  
23       closures, including the specific effects of school clo-  
24       sures on marginalized children and youth, including

1 girls, minority populations, and those with disabili-  
 2 ties.

3 (2) Descriptions of the effectiveness, cost, ac-  
 4 cessibility, and reach of the most commonly used  
 5 forms of distance learning in low resource contexts.

6 (3) An overview of Agency programs being ear-  
 7 ried out to continue learning during the COVID-19  
 8 pandemic, including existing data on funding and  
 9 programmatic focus disaggregated by gender, coun-  
 10 try, education level, and disability.

11 (4) Identification and description of any gaps  
 12 in, or barriers to, reaching and educating marginal-  
 13 ized populations, such as girls, children with disabili-  
 14 ties, displaced children, or other children adversely  
 15 affected by the COVID-19 pandemic with distance  
 16 learning interventions.

17 (5) A description of the Agency's plan and  
 18 needed tools and resources to support continued dis-  
 19 tance learning interventions, safe school reopening,  
 20 assessments of student learning levels, remedial and  
 21 accelerated learning, reenrollment campaigns for  
 22 out-of-school children and youth, and education sys-  
 23 tem strengthening and resilience building efforts.

24 (6) An analysis of the efforts of other actors in  
 25 global basic education policy and programming to

1 provide education during ~~COVID-19~~, including part-  
 2 ner organizations, donors, and bilateral and multilat-  
 3 eral organizations, and the role of USAID in those  
 4 efforts.

5 (7) Opportunities to partner and support ef-  
 6 forts to expand access to digital infrastructure,  
 7 internet connectivity, and learning resources in areas  
 8 that lack access to digital and remote learning infra-  
 9 structure and resources, including rural and remote  
 10 communities.

11 (c) PUBLIC AVAILABILITY.—The report required by  
 12 subsection (a) shall be made available to the public.

13 (d) APPROPRIATE CONGRESSIONAL COMMITTEES  
 14 DEFINED.—In this section, the term “appropriate con-  
 15 gressional committees” means—

16 (1) the Committee on Foreign Relations and  
 17 the Committee on Appropriations of the Senate; and

18 (2) the Committee on Foreign Affairs and the  
 19 Committee on Appropriations of the House of Rep-  
 20 resentatives.

21 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

22 *This Act may be cited as the “Global Learning Loss*  
 23 *Assessment Act of 2022”.*

1 **SEC. 2. STATEMENT OF POLICY.**

2 *It is the policy of the United States that United States-*  
 3 *funded basic education programs operating in low- and*  
 4 *middle-income countries should seek to—*

5 *(1) provide safe, inclusive learning opportunities*  
 6 *for students and teachers, especially for the most*  
 7 *marginalized, including girls, minority populations,*  
 8 *displaced children, children with disabilities, and pre-*  
 9 *viously out of school children;*

10 *(2) build local capacity and help countries*  
 11 *strengthen the resilience of their education systems,*  
 12 *including opportunities for early childhood develop-*  
 13 *ment;*

14 *(3) improve the availability, delivery, quality,*  
 15 *and equity of education services from early childhood*  
 16 *through secondary education, including in remote,*  
 17 *home, and school-based learning contexts; and*

18 *(4) support the safe return of children to school*  
 19 *and work to enroll previously out-of-school children*  
 20 *and youth, particularly the most marginalized.*

21 **SEC. 3. REPORT.**

22 *(a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 180 days after the*  
 23 *date of the enactment of this Act, the Administrator of the*  
 24 *United States Agency for International Development shall*  
 25 *submit to the appropriate congressional committees a report*  
 26 *on the impact of the COVID–19 pandemic on United States*

1 *Agency for International Development basic education pro-*  
 2 *grams.*

3       **(b) MATTERS TO BE INCLUDED.**—*The report required*  
 4 *under subsection (a) shall include, at a minimum, the fol-*  
 5 *lowing elements:*

6           **(1) An assessment of—**

7                   **(A) the impact of the COVID–19 pandemic**  
 8 *on such basic education programs, including ex-*  
 9 *isting data on the magnitude of learning loss*  
 10 *that has resulted from protracted school closures,*  
 11 *disaggregated by gender;*

12                   **(B) the specific effects of school and learn-**  
 13 *ing space closures on marginalized children and*  
 14 *youth served by USAID basic education pro-*  
 15 *grams, such as girls, minority populations, dis-*  
 16 *placed children, and those with disabilities;*

17                   **(C) the capacity constraints faced by part-**  
 18 *ner countries and affected communities in ensur-*  
 19 *ing safe and healthy in-person learning environ-*  
 20 *ments and delivering effective remote learning*  
 21 *alternatives, disaggregated by urban versus rural*  
 22 *communities and historically underserved or*  
 23 *marginalized communities;*

24                   **(D) the impact on children’s education be-**  
 25 *yond school closures, particularly for girls who*

1        *lost access to education due to increased house-*  
 2        *hold and childcare duties during the COVID–19*  
 3        *pandemic; and*

4                *(E) available data on the percentage of stu-*  
 5        *dents who are returning to school upon reopen-*  
 6        *ing, disaggregated by gender.*

7        *(2) An overview of—*

8                *(A) how USAID, independently and in co-*  
 9        *ordination with partners, has adapted basic edu-*  
 10        *cation programming during the COVID–19 pan-*  
 11        *demic to support continued learning;*

12                *(B) barriers that USAID has experienced or*  
 13        *observed to reaching students with effective and*  
 14        *equitable distance learning opportunities while*  
 15        *schools have been closed as a public health pre-*  
 16        *caution during the COVID–19 pandemic, includ-*  
 17        *ing with respect to marginalized populations*  
 18        *such as girls, minority populations, displaced*  
 19        *children, and those with disabilities; and*

20                *(C) education interventions, best practices,*  
 21        *and innovations deployed in middle- and lower-*  
 22        *income countries that are enabling the continued*  
 23        *delivery of high quality and equitable basic edu-*  
 24        *cation despite challenges caused by the COVID–*  
 25        *19 pandemic.*

1           (3) *A description of—*

2                   (A) *USAID’s plans to support, as safe and*  
3                   *practicable, high-quality distance learning inter-*  
4                   *ventions, re-enrollment initiatives for out-of-*  
5                   *school children and youth, school reopening, as-*  
6                   *sessments of student learning levels, remedial*  
7                   *and accelerated learning, and education system*  
8                   *strengthening and resilience-building efforts;*

9                   (B) *USAID’s approach to addressing the so-*  
10                  *cial and health risks stemming from school clo-*  
11                  *sures necessitated by the COVID–19 pandemic,*  
12                  *particularly with respect to marginalized chil-*  
13                  *dren and youth such as girls, minority popu-*  
14                  *lations, displaced children, and children with*  
15                  *disabilities;*

16                  (C) *opportunities for USAID to partner*  
17                  *with other international development actors and*  
18                  *organizations, including other donors, the United*  
19                  *States International Development Finance Cor-*  
20                  *poration, multilateral banks, faith-based institu-*  
21                  *tions, local and international organizations, and*  
22                  *the private sector, to enable continued access to*  
23                  *quality basic education in public health emer-*  
24                  *gencies, including through efforts to support ex-*  
25                  *panded access to digital infrastructure, internet*

1           *connectivity, and learning resources in areas*  
2           *that lack access to such infrastructure and re-*  
3           *sources; and*

4           *(D) any additional authorities and re-*  
5           *sources required by USAID to execute the activi-*  
6           *ties described in subparagraphs (A), (B), and*  
7           *(C).*

8           *(c) PUBLIC AVAILABILITY.—The report required by*  
9           *subsection (a) shall be made available to the public.*

10          *(d) APPROPRIATE CONGRESSIONAL COMMITTEES DE-*  
11          *FINED.—In this section, the term “appropriate congres-*  
12          *sional committees” means—*

13               *(1) the Committee on Foreign Relations and the*  
14               *Committee on Appropriations of the Senate; and*

15               *(2) the Committee on Foreign Affairs and the*  
16               *Committee on Appropriations of the House of Rep-*  
17               *resentatives.*



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Reported with an amendment