

118TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

S. 3535

To support empowerment, economic security, and educational opportunities for adolescent girls around the world, and for other purposes.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

DECEMBER 14, 2023

Mrs. SHAHEEN (for herself and Ms. MURKOWSKI) introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations

A BILL

To support empowerment, economic security, and educational opportunities for adolescent girls around the world, 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 “Keeping Girls in School 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. Definitions.
- Sec. 3. Sense of Congress.
- Sec. 4. Secondary education for adolescent girls.

Sec. 5. Global strategy requirement.
Sec. 6. Transparency and reporting to Congress.

1 **SEC. 2. DEFINITIONS.**

2 In this Act:

3 (1) ADMINISTRATOR.—The term “Adminis-
4 trator” means the Administrator of the United
5 States Agency for International Development.

6 (2) APPROPRIATE CONGRESSIONAL COMMIT-
7 TEES.—the term “appropriate congressional commit-
8 tees” means—

9 (A) the Committee on Foreign Relations of
10 the Senate;

11 (B) the Committee on Appropriations of
12 the Senate;

13 (C) the Committee on Foreign Affairs of
14 the House of Representatives; and

15 (D) the Committee on Appropriations of
16 the House of Representatives.

17 (3) SECRETARY.—The term “Secretary” means
18 the Secretary of State.

19 (4) USAID.—The term “USAID” means the
20 United States Agency for International Develop-
21 ment.

22 **SEC. 3. SENSE OF CONGRESS.**

23 It is the sense of Congress that—

1 (1) every child, regardless of gender or place of
2 birth, deserves an equal opportunity to access qual-
3 ity education;

4 (2) education is a key investment in—

5 (A) the future, well-being, and prosperity
6 of girls; and

7 (B) the stability and productivity of their
8 communities;

9 (3) the United States has been a global leader
10 in efforts to expand and improve access to quality
11 basic education for all, particularly marginalized and
12 vulnerable populations, including women and girls;

13 (4) gains with respect to girls' secondary edu-
14 cation and empowerment have been proven to cor-
15 relate strongly with progress in gender equality and
16 women's rights, a stated priority of United States
17 foreign policy and national security;

18 (5) achieving gender parity in both access to
19 and quality of educational opportunity contributes
20 significantly to economic growth and development,
21 thereby lowering the risk for violence and instability;
22 and

23 (6) education is a lifesaving humanitarian inter-
24 vention that protects the lives, futures, and well-
25 being of girls.

1 **SEC. 4. SECONDARY EDUCATION FOR ADOLESCENT GIRLS.**

2 (a) **AUTHORITY.**—

3 (1) **IN GENERAL.**—The Secretary and the Ad-
4 ministrator shall—

5 (A) promote access to quality education for
6 girls globally; and

7 (B) enter into agreements, including agree-
8 ments across sectors, to address the barriers
9 described in subsection (b) that adolescent girls
10 face in accessing a quality secondary education,
11 particularly in countries in which adolescent
12 girls are significantly more likely to drop out of
13 school than boys.

14 (2) **REQUIREMENTS.**—Activities carried out
15 pursuant to paragraph (1) shall—

16 (A) be informed by a context-specific, evi-
17 dence-based analysis of the challenges that girls
18 face, which inhibit girls from successfully
19 transitioning to, remaining enrolled in, and
20 completing secondary school;

21 (B) ensure that integrated programs—

22 (i) holistically support safe, inclusive,
23 and quality educational opportunities; and

24 (ii) create empowering environments
25 to enable girls—

1 (I) to enroll in and regularly at-
2 tend school;

3 (II) to successfully transition
4 from primary to secondary school; and

5 (III) to eventually graduate after
6 achieving learning outcomes and being
7 in a position to make healthy transi-
8 tions into adulthood; and

9 (C) seek to use United States Government
10 strategies and frameworks relevant to inter-
11 national basic education, women's and girls'
12 empowerment, and gender equality to integrate
13 multi-sectoral, evidenced-based approaches to
14 adolescent girls' education and well-being.

15 (b) SPECIFIC BARRIERS.—The barriers described in
16 this subsection are—

17 (1) harmful social and cultural norms;

18 (2) lack of safety at school or traveling to
19 school and online, including harassment and other
20 forms of physical, sexual, or psychological violence;

21 (3) child, early, and forced marriage;

22 (4) female genital mutilation;

23 (5) distance from a secondary school;

24 (6) cost of secondary schooling, including fees,
25 clothing, and supplies;

1 (7) inadequate sanitation facilities and products
2 available at secondary schools;

3 (8) prioritization of boys' secondary education;

4 (9) poor nutrition;

5 (10) early pregnancy and motherhood;

6 (11) HIV infection;

7 (12) disability;

8 (13) discrimination based on religious or ethnic
9 identity;

10 (14) heavy workload due to household tasks or
11 care burdens; and

12 (15) inequitable access to digital resources.

13 (c) ACCEPTANCE OF PROPOSALS OR APPLICATIONS
14 FOR AWARDS.—Beginning not later than 180 days after
15 the date of the enactment of this Act, the Administrator
16 shall seek proposals or applications for awards to conduct
17 the activities described in the agreements entered into pur-
18 suant to subsection (a)(1)(B).

19 (d) MONITORING AND EVALUATION.—The Adminis-
20 trator shall seek to ensure that activities carried out pur-
21 suant to agreements referred to in subsection (a)(1)(B)—

22 (1) employ rigorous monitoring and evaluation
23 methodologies, including measurable goals, out-
24 comes, and benchmarks, to ensure that such activi-
25 ties demonstrably—

1 (A) improve adolescent girls' access to sec-
2 ondary education;

3 (B) close the gap in gender parity for sec-
4 ondary education; and

5 (C) improve the quality of girls' education;

6 (2) disaggregate data collected and reported by
7 age, gender, marital and motherhood status, dis-
8 ability, and urbanity, to the extent practicable and
9 appropriate; and

10 (3) use, to the extent possible, indicators and
11 methodologies identified by the Interagency Working
12 Group for the Strategy on International Basic Edu-
13 cation.

14 (e) COORDINATION AND OVERSIGHT.—

15 (1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary, in coordina-
16 tion with the Administrator, shall be responsible for
17 the oversight and coordination of all activities of the
18 United States Government carried out pursuant to
19 this section, as appropriate.

20 (2) DEVELOPMENT OF AGREEMENTS.—In de-
21 veloping agreements described in subsection
22 (a)(1)(B), the Secretary, in coordination with the
23 Administrator, shall consult with representatives of
24 Federal departments and agencies that are imple-

1 menting the United States Global Strategy to Em-
2 power Adolescent Girls.

3 (3) COORDINATION REQUIREMENTS.—In car-
4 rying out the activities described in paragraphs (1)
5 and (2), the Secretary and the Administrator shall
6 coordinate with the Senior Coordinator for Inter-
7 national Basic Education Assistance at USAID, the
8 Youth Coordinator at USAID, the Senior Coordi-
9 nator for Gender Equality and Women’s Empower-
10 ment at USAID, and the Ambassador-at-Large for
11 Global Women’s Issues at the Department of State.

12 (4) COORDINATION WITH OTHER STRATE-
13 GIES.—Activities carried out pursuant to agreements
14 described in subsection (a)(1)(B), shall be carried
15 out in a manner that is consistent with—

16 (A) the latest update of the United States
17 Global Strategy to Empower Adolescent Girls;
18 and

19 (B) the United States Government Strat-
20 egy on International Basic Education, including
21 its objective to expand access to quality basic
22 education for all, particularly marginalized and
23 vulnerable populations.

1 **SEC. 5. GLOBAL STRATEGY REQUIREMENT.**

2 (a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 1 year after the
3 date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary, in coordi-
4 nation with the Administrator, the Ambassador-at-Large
5 for Global Women’s Issues at the Department of State,
6 the Senior Coordinator for Gender Equality and Women’s
7 Empowerment at USAID, and the Senior Coordinator for
8 International Basic Education Assistance at USAID,
9 shall—

10 (1) review and update a United States Global
11 Strategy to Empower Adolescent Girls, which in-
12 cludes a focus on girls’ access to quality, inclusive
13 secondary education, and subsequent agency imple-
14 mentation plans; and

15 (2) submit the updated strategy to the appro-
16 priate congressional committees.

17 (b) 5-YEAR UPDATE OF STRATEGY.—Not later than
18 5 years after the date of the enactment of this Act, the
19 Secretary, in coordination with the Administrator, shall
20 submit to the appropriate congressional committees an-
21 other update and revision of—

22 (1) the United States Global Strategy to Em-
23 power Adolescent Girls; and

24 (2) the agency implementation plans for such
25 strategy.

1 (c) CONSULTATION.—In reviewing and updating the
2 strategy and implementation plans pursuant to subsection
3 (a), the Secretary, in coordination with the Administrator,
4 the Ambassador-at-Large for Global Women’s Issues at
5 the Department of State, the Senior Coordinator for Gen-
6 der Equality and Women’s Empowerment at USAID, and
7 the Senior Coordinator for International Basic Education
8 Assistance at USAID, shall consult with and provide
9 meaningful opportunity for review with—

10 (1) the heads of relevant Federal departments
11 and agencies (or their designees);

12 (2) the appropriate congressional committees;
13 and

14 (3) representatives of United States and inter-
15 national civil society and multilateral organizations
16 with demonstrated experience and expertise in em-
17 powering adolescent girls and promoting gender
18 equality in education, including local civil society or-
19 ganizations, faith-based organizations, to the extent
20 possible, program participants.

21 (d) COORDINATION.—In carrying out the activities
22 described in his section, the Secretary and the Adminis-
23 trator shall coordinate with the Ambassador-at-Large for
24 Global Women’s Issues at the Department of State, the
25 Senior Coordinator for Gender Equality and Women’s

1 Empowerment at USAID, the Senior Coordinator for
2 International Basic Education Assistance at USAID, and
3 the Youth Coordinator at USAID.

4 **SEC. 6. TRANSPARENCY AND REPORTING TO CONGRESS.**

5 (a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 1 year after the
6 date of the submission of the strategy required under sec-
7 tion 5, and biennially thereafter for 10 years, the Sec-
8 retary, in coordination with the Administrator, shall sub-
9 mit a report to the appropriate congressional committees
10 that describes—

11 (1) the activities initiated pursuant to the au-
12 thorities provided in this Act; and

13 (2) the manner and extent to which such activi-
14 ties are monitored and evaluated, in accordance with
15 section 4(d).

16 (b) AVAILABILITY.—Each report submitted pursuant
17 to subsection (a) shall be made available on a text-based,
18 searchable, and publicly available website of USAID.

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