

118TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

S. _____

To support foreign assistance programs and diplomatic initiatives to counter violence in the Western Hemisphere.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

Mr. KAINE (for himself and Mr. TILLIS) introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on _____

A BILL

To support foreign assistance programs and diplomatic initiatives to counter violence in the Western Hemisphere.

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 “Countering Violence in the Western Hemisphere 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. Including gender-based violence in Country Reports on Human Rights Practices.
- Sec. 4. Engagement with women-led local organizations.
- Sec. 5. Economic empowerment programming.
- Sec. 6. Training local law enforcement.

Sec. 7. Contribution to the United Nations Trust Fund to End Violence against Women.

Sec. 8. Educational exchange programming.

Sec. 9. Report on violence as a driver of migration and an indicator of foreign influence.

1 **SEC. 2. DEFINITIONS.**

2 In this Act:

3 (1) APPROPRIATE CONGRESSIONAL COMMIT-
4 TEES.—The term “appropriate congressional com-
5 mittees” means—

6 (A) the Committee on Foreign Relations of
7 the Senate;

8 (B) the Committee on Appropriations of
9 the Senate;

10 (C) the Committee on Foreign Affairs of
11 the House of Representatives; and

12 (D) the Committee on Appropriations of
13 the House of Representatives.

14 (2) USAID.—The term “USAID” means the
15 United States Agency for International Develop-
16 ment.

17 (3) VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND CHIL-
18 DREN.—The term “violence against women and chil-
19 dren” means any harmful threat or act directed at
20 an individual or group based on actual or perceived
21 biological sex, gender identity or expression, sexual
22 orientation, or a lack of adherence to varying so-

1 cially-constructed norms around masculinity and
2 femininity.

3 **SEC. 3. INCLUDING GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE IN COUNTRY**
4 **REPORTS ON HUMAN RIGHTS PRACTICES.**

5 Section 116(d) of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961
6 (22 U.S.C. 2151n(d)) is amended—

7 (1) in paragraph (11)—

8 (A) in subparagraph (B), by adding “and”
9 at the end; and

10 (B) in subparagraph (C), by striking
11 “and” at the end;

12 (2) in paragraph (12)(C)(ii), by striking the pe-
13 riod at the end and inserting a semicolon;

14 (3) in paragraph (13)—

15 (A) in the matter preceding subparagraph
16 (A), by striking “Wherever” and inserting
17 “wherever”; and

18 (B) in subparagraph (E), by striking the
19 period at the end and inserting “; and”; and

20 (4) by adding at the end the following:

21 “(14) wherever applicable, a description of the
22 nature and extent of gender-based violence.”.

23 **SEC. 4. ENGAGEMENT WITH WOMEN-LED LOCAL ORGANIZA-**
24 **TIONS.**

25 (a) IN GENERAL.—USAID shall—

1 (1) within its model of locally led development,
2 engage partner governments in the Western Hemi-
3 sphere to develop and implement programming to in-
4 crease direct local funding to women-led or women-
5 focused nonprofit organizations and local partners
6 working—

7 (A) to counter violence against women and
8 children within their respective communities;

9 (B) to empower victims of violence against
10 women and children; and

11 (C) to support the economic empowerment,
12 financial independence, and security of women;
13 and

14 (2) simplify and increase access to resources for
15 local partners working to advance efforts to prevent
16 and address violence against women and children in
17 the Western Hemisphere.

18 (b) BRIEFING.—Not later than 90 days after the date
19 of the enactment of this Act, USAID shall brief appro-
20 priate congressional committees regarding its proposed
21 plans to implement subsection (a).

22 (c) STRATEGY.—Not later than 180 days after the
23 date of the enactment of this Act, the Administrator of
24 USAID shall submit a strategy to the appropriate con-
25 gressional committees that incorporates specific, measur-

1 able benchmarks to achieve the purposes described in sub-
2 section (a).

3 (d) ANNUAL PROGRESS UPDATE.—Not later than 1
4 year after the date of the enactment of this Act, and annu-
5 ally thereafter for the following 5 years, the Administrator
6 of USAID shall submit to the appropriate congressional
7 committees a written description of the progress made by
8 USAID towards achieving the benchmarks included in the
9 strategy submitted pursuant to subsection (c).

10 **SEC. 5. ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT PROGRAMMING.**

11 The Administrator of USAID shall expand and
12 strengthen the implementation of savings groups in the
13 Western Hemisphere by including additional partner coun-
14 tries and integrating violence against women and children
15 prevention and response activities, such as household dia-
16 logues.

17 **SEC. 6. TRAINING LOCAL LAW ENFORCEMENT.**

18 (a) COLLABORATION.—The Department of State and
19 USAID shall collaborate with local law enforcement and
20 criminal justice agencies to conduct training to report,
21 prevent, investigate, and prosecute instances of gender-
22 based violence in the Western Hemisphere.

23 (b) GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE PREVENTION TRAIN-
24 ING PROGRAM.—The Secretary of State shall work with
25 the International Law Enforcement Academy San Sal-

1 vador (ILEA San Salvador) and the Bureau of Inter-
2 national Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs to de-
3 velop and implement a training program for foreign law
4 enforcement officers designed to help prevent, investigate,
5 prosecute, and report instances of gender-based violence.

6 (c) WESTERN HEMISPHERE GENDER-BASED VIO-
7 LENCE LAW ENFORCEMENT ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY.—
8 Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment
9 of this Act, the Secretary of State, in collaboration with
10 the USAID Administrator, shall develop and submit to the
11 appropriate congressional committees a strategy—

12 (1) to support law enforcement and criminal
13 justice agencies in reporting, preventing, inves-
14 tigating, and prosecuting instances of gender-based
15 violence in the Western Hemisphere; and

16 (2) to increase the focuses of the Department
17 of State and USAID on—

18 (A) rights-based, gender-responsive, and
19 trauma-informed training and education on
20 gender-based violence prevention and investiga-
21 tion;

22 (B) proactive engagement with civil society
23 organizations, academia, and international sup-
24 porting actors for an informed response to gen-
25 der-based violence; and

1 (C) the standardization of the investigation
2 processes for cases of gender-based violence
3 that take a victim and survivor-centered and
4 rights-based approach.

5 **SEC. 7. CONTRIBUTION TO THE UNITED NATIONS TRUST**
6 **FUND TO END VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN.**

7 Of the amounts made available under the heading
8 “International Organizations and Programs” for fiscal
9 year 2025 and for each subsequent fiscal year, \$2,000,000
10 shall be made available annually for the United Nations
11 Trust Fund to End Violence Against Women.

12 **SEC. 8. EDUCATIONAL EXCHANGE PROGRAMMING.**

13 (a) **RESEARCH PARTNERSHIPS AND EDUCATIONAL**
14 **EXCHANGE OPPORTUNITIES.**—The Secretary of State and
15 the USAID Administrator shall strengthen and expand re-
16 search partnerships and educational exchange opportuni-
17 ties for scholars, researchers, and students through en-
18 gagement with nongovernmental organizations and private
19 sector institutions that work on violence against women
20 and children in the Western Hemisphere.

21 (b) **FULBRIGHT SCHOLARS.**—The Assistant Sec-
22 retary of State for Educational and Cultural Affairs shall
23 encourage the participation in the J. William Fulbright
24 Educational Exchange Program of researchers, scholars,
25 and students who are focused on researching and address-

1 ing the root causes of violence against women and children
2 in the Western Hemisphere.

3 (c) GLOBAL FORUMS.—The Ambassador-at-Large
4 for the Office of Global Women’s Issues shall encourage
5 the involvement of scholars from the Western Hemisphere
6 focusing on researching violence against women and chil-
7 dren in global forums and sessions to share their findings
8 and to strengthen the United States’ response to violence
9 against women and children in the Western Hemisphere.

10 **SEC. 9. REPORT ON VIOLENCE AS A DRIVER OF MIGRATION**
11 **AND AN INDICATOR OF FOREIGN INFLUENCE.**

12 Not later than 180 days after the date of the enact-
13 ment of this Act, the Secretary of State, in collaboration
14 with the USAID Administrator, shall submit a report to
15 the appropriate congressional committees that—

16 (1) examines the role of violence against women
17 and children in the Western Hemisphere as a driver
18 of irregular migration;

19 (2) identifies gaps in the United States’ strat-
20 egy for addressing the root causes of migration in
21 Central America to counter violence against women
22 and children;

23 (3) identifies which foreign governments are in-
24 volved in countering or promoting violence against
25 women and children;

1 (4) examines ways in which the United States
2 and its allies can continue as the leading partner in
3 the region on countering violence against women and
4 children; and

5 (5) contains a regional analysis of the root
6 causes of violence against women and children and
7 its impact on irregular migration, particular migra-
8 tion originating from Central America and the Ande-
9 an region.