

115TH CONGRESS  
1ST SESSION

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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.

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IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

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

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**A BILL**

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.

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 “Protecting Girls’ Ac-  
5 cess to Education in Vulnerable Settings Act”.

6 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

7 Congress finds the following:

1           (1) At the start of 2017, more than 65,000,000  
2 people have been displaced by disasters and conflicts  
3 around the world, the highest number recorded since  
4 the end of World War II, of which more than  
5 21,000,000 people are refugees.

6           (2) More than half of the population of dis-  
7 placed people are children and, according to the  
8 United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees,  
9 nearly 4,000,000 school-aged displaced children lack  
10 access to primary education.

11           (3) Education offers socioeconomic opportuni-  
12 ties, psychological stability, and physical protection  
13 for displaced people, particularly for women and  
14 girls, who might otherwise be vulnerable to severe  
15 forms of trafficking in persons (as such term is de-  
16 fined in section 103(9) of the Trafficking Victims  
17 Protection Act of 2000 (22 U.S.C. 7102(9))), child  
18 marriage, sexual exploitation, or economic disenfran-  
19 chisement, and contributes to long-term recovery  
20 and economic opportunities for displaced people and  
21 for the communities hosting them.

22           (4) Displaced children face considerable bar-  
23 riers to accessing educational services and, because  
24 the duration of such displacement is, on average, 20

1 years, such children may spend the entirety of their  
2 childhood without access to such services.

3 (5) Despite the rising need for such services,  
4 less than two percent of global emergency aid was  
5 directed toward educational services in 2016.

6 **SEC. 3. SENSE OF CONGRESS.**

7 It is the sense of Congress that—

8 (1) it is critical to ensure that children, particu-  
9 larly girls, displaced by conflicts overseas are able to  
10 access educational services because such access can  
11 combat extremism and reduce exploitation and pov-  
12 erty; and

13 (2) the educational needs of vulnerable women  
14 and girls should be considered in the design, imple-  
15 mentation, and evaluation of related United States  
16 foreign assistance policies and programs.

17 **SEC. 4. STATEMENT OF POLICY.**

18 It is the policy of the United States to—

19 (1) partner with and encourage other countries,  
20 public and private multilateral institutions, and non-  
21 governmental and civil society organizations, includ-  
22 ing faith-based organizations and organizations rep-  
23 resenting parents and children, to support efforts to  
24 ensure that displaced children have access to safe  
25 primary and secondary education;

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

6           (3) incorporate into the design and implementa-  
7           tion of such programs measures to evaluate the im-  
8           pact of the programs on girls, with respect to the re-  
9           duction of child marriage, gender-based violence, and  
10          severe forms of trafficking in persons (as such term  
11          is defined in section 103(9) of the Trafficking Vic-  
12          tims Protection Act of 2000 (22 U.S.C. 7102(9)));  
13          and

14          (4) coordinate with the governments of coun-  
15          tries hosting significant numbers of displaced people  
16          to—

17                 (A) promote the inclusion of displaced chil-  
18                 dren into the educational systems of such coun-  
19                 tries; and

20                 (B) develop innovative approaches to pro-  
21                 viding safe primary and secondary educational  
22                 opportunities in circumstances in which such in-  
23                 clusion is not possible or appropriate, such as  
24                 schools that permit more children to be edu-

1 cated by extending the hours of schooling and  
2 expanding the number of teachers.

3 **SEC. 5. UNITED STATES ASSISTANCE TO SUPPORT EDU-**  
4 **CATIONAL SERVICES FOR DISPLACED CHIL-**  
5 **DREN.**

6 (a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of State and the  
7 Administrator of the United States Agency for Inter-  
8 national Development are authorized to prioritize and ad-  
9 vance ongoing efforts to support programs that—

10 (1) provide safe primary and secondary edu-  
11 cation for displaced children;

12 (2) build the capacity of institutions in coun-  
13 tries hosting displaced people to prevent discrimina-  
14 tion against displaced children, especially displaced  
15 girls, who seek access to such education; and

16 (3) help increase the access of displaced chil-  
17 dren, especially displaced girls, to educational, eco-  
18 nomic, and entrepreneurial opportunities, including  
19 through the governmental authorities responsible for  
20 educational or youth services in such host countries.

21 (b) COORDINATION WITH MULTILATERAL ORGANI-  
22 ZATIONS.—The Secretary and the Administrator are au-  
23 thorized to coordinate with the World Bank, appropriate  
24 agencies of the United Nations, and other relevant multi-  
25 lateral organizations to work with governments in other

1 countries to collect relevant data, disaggregated by age  
2 and gender, on the ability of displaced people to access  
3 education and participate in economic activity, in order  
4 to improve the targeting, monitoring, and evaluation of re-  
5 lated assistance efforts.

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

11 **SEC. 6. REPORT.**

12 During the five-year period beginning on the date of  
13 the enactment of this Act, the Secretary and the Adminis-  
14 trator shall include in any report or evaluation submitted  
15 to Congress relating to a foreign assistance program for  
16 natural or manmade disaster relief or response the fol-  
17 lowing information (to the extent practicable and appro-  
18 priate):

19 (1) A breakdown of the beneficiaries of such  
20 program by location, age, gender, marital status,  
21 and school enrollment status.

22 (2) A description of how such program benefits  
23 displaced people.

- 1           (3) A description of any primary or secondary
- 2           educational services supported by such program that
- 3           specifically address the needs of displaced girls.