

118TH CONGRESS  
2D SESSION

# S. 4517

To authorize the establishment of a Negotiations Support Unit in the Department of State, and for other purposes.

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IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

JUNE 12, 2024

Mr. MERKLEY introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations

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## A BILL

To authorize the establishment of a Negotiations Support Unit in the Department of State, 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. AUTHORITY TO ESTABLISH NEGOTIATIONS**  
4                       **SUPPORT UNIT WITHIN DEPARTMENT OF**  
5                       **STATE.**

6       (a) SENSE OF CONGRESS.—It is the sense of Con-  
7       gress that—

8               (1) there is a need for the United States Gov-  
9       ernment to maintain a permanent institutional hub  
10      for technical expertise, strategic advice, and knowl-

1 edge management in negotiations, mediation, and  
2 peace processes in order to prioritize and invest in  
3 diplomacy;

4 (2) the United States plays a unique role in en-  
5 abling and supporting peace processes and complex  
6 political negotiations, the success of which are essen-  
7 tial to stability and democracy around the world;

8 (3) the meaningful engagement of conflict-af-  
9 fected communities, particularly women, youth, and  
10 other impacted populations, is vital to durable,  
11 implementable, and sustainable peace;

12 (4) negotiation requires a specific technical and  
13 functional skillset, and thus institutional expertise in  
14 this practice area should include trained practi-  
15 tioners and subject matter experts;

16 (5) such skills should continue to be employed  
17 as the United States advises and contributes to  
18 peace processes, including those where the United  
19 States plays a supporting role or is led by multilat-  
20 eral and international partners; and

21 (6) training programs for United States dip-  
22 lomats should draw upon this expertise and United  
23 States lessons learned to help equip diplomats with  
24 skills to respond to peace processes and complex po-  
25 litical negotiations, and how to request support.

1 (b) NEGOTIATIONS SUPPORT UNIT.—Section 1 of the  
2 State Department Basic Authorities Act (22 U.S.C.  
3 2651a) is amended by adding at the end the following new  
4 subsection:

5 “(p) NEGOTIATIONS SUPPORT UNIT.—

6 “(1) AUTHORITY TO ESTABLISH.—The Sec-  
7 retary of State may establish within the Department  
8 of State a unit to be known as the ‘Negotiations  
9 Support Unit’ responsible for carrying out the func-  
10 tions described in paragraph (2), as appropriate.

11 “(2) FUNCTIONS.—The functions described in  
12 this paragraph are the following:

13 “(A) Serving as a permanent institutional  
14 hub and resource for negotiations and peace  
15 process expertise and knowledge management.

16 “(B) Advising the Secretary of State, other  
17 relevant senior officials, members of the For-  
18 eign Service, and employees of the Department  
19 of State on the substance, process, and strategy  
20 of negotiations, mediation, peace processes, and  
21 other complex political negotiations from strat-  
22 egy and planning to implementation.

23 “(C) Supporting the development and im-  
24 plementation of United States policy related to  
25 complex political negotiations and peace proc-

1           esses, including those led by multilateral and  
2           international partners.

3           “(D) Advising on mediation and negotia-  
4           tions programs to implement United States pol-  
5           icy.

6           “(E) Supporting training for Foreign Serv-  
7           ices Officers and civil servants on tailored nego-  
8           tiation and mediation skills.

9           “(F) Working with other governments,  
10          international organizations, and nongovern-  
11          mental organizations, as appropriate, to support  
12          the development and implementation of United  
13          States policy on peace processes and complex  
14          political negotiations.

15          “(G) Any additional duties the Secretary  
16          of State may prescribe.

17          “(3) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—  
18          There is authorized to be appropriated \$5,000,000  
19          for the establishment of the Negotiations Support  
20          Unit under paragraph (1).”.

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