

117TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

H. R. 9273

To direct the Secretary of State to establish a fellowship program for regional democracy and rule of law activities in Central America.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

NOVEMBER 3, 2022

Mrs. TORRES of California (for herself and Mr. SIREs) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Affairs

A BILL

To direct the Secretary of State to establish a fellowship program for regional democracy and rule of law activities in Central America.

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 “Central American Net-
5 work for Democracy Act”.

6 **SEC. 2. DEPARTMENT OF STATE FELLOWSHIPS FOR RE-**
7 **GIONAL DEMOCRACY AND RULE OF LAW AC-**
8 **TIVITIES IN CENTRAL AMERICA.**

9 (a) ESTABLISHMENT.—The Secretary of State shall
10 establish a fellowship program, to be known as the “Cen-

1 tral American Network for Democracy”, to support a re-
2 gional corps of civil society activists, lawyers (including
3 members of the judiciary and prosecutors’ offices), jour-
4 nalists, and investigators for regional democracy and rule
5 of law activities in Central America.

6 (b) ELEMENTS.—The fellowship program required by
7 subsection (a) shall—

8 (1) provide a temporary respite for members of
9 the regional corps in a safe environment;

10 (2) allow members of the regional corps to con-
11 tinue to work through engagement with universities,
12 think tanks, government actors, and international
13 organizations; and

14 (3) assist members of the regional corps in
15 leveraging lessons learned in order to contribute to
16 regional democracy and rule of law activities in Cen-
17 tral America, including electoral and transition sup-
18 port, institutional reform, anti-corruption investiga-
19 tions, and local engagement.

20 (c) REGIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL SUPPORT.—The
21 Secretary of State shall take such steps as may be nec-
22 essary—

23 (1) to obtain support for the fellowship program
24 required by subsection (a) from international foun-
25 dations, regional and United States governmental

1 and nongovernmental organizations, and regional
2 and United States universities; and

3 (2) to ensure the fellowship program is well co-
4 ordinated with and complementary of existing mech-
5 anisms, such as the Lifeline Embattled CSO Assist-
6 ance Fund.

7 (d) FOCUS; SAFETY.—Activities carried out under
8 the fellowship program required by subsection (a)—

9 (1) should focus on coordination and consulta-
10 tion with key agencies and international bodies to
11 continue their democracy efforts, including the De-
12 partment of State, the United States Agency for
13 International Development, the Department of Jus-
14 tice, the Department of the Treasury, the Organiza-
15 tion of American States, the Inter-American Court
16 for Human Rights, and the United Nations; and

17 (2) may include strengthened protection for the
18 physical safety of individuals who must leave their
19 home country to participate in the program, includ-
20 ing assistance for temporary relocation, English lan-
21 guage learning, and mental health support.

22 (e) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There is
23 authorized to be appropriated to carry out this section
24 \$10,000,000 for fiscal year 2023.

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