

117TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 1488

To promote international exchanges on best election practices, cultivate more secure democratic institutions around the world, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

MARCH 2, 2021

Mr. CASTRO of Texas (for himself, Mrs. WAGNER, Ms. TITUS, and Mr. FITZPATRICK) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Affairs

A BILL

To promote international exchanges on best election practices, cultivate more secure democratic institutions 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.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Global Electoral Ex-
5 change Act of 2021”.

6 **SEC. 2. SENSE OF CONGRESS.**

7 It is the sense of Congress that—

8 (1) recent elections globally have illustrated the
9 urgent need for the promotion and exchange of

1 international best election practices, particularly in
2 the areas of cybersecurity, results transmission,
3 transparency of electoral data, election dispute reso-
4 lution, and the elimination of discriminatory reg-
5 istration practices and other electoral irregularities;

6 (2) the advancement of democracy worldwide
7 promotes United States interests, as stable democ-
8 racies provide new market opportunities and pro-
9 mote economic freedom and regional security;

10 (3) credible elections are the cornerstone of a
11 healthy democracy and enable all persons to exercise
12 their basic human right to have a say in how they
13 are governed;

14 (4) inclusive elections strengthen the credibility
15 and stability of democracies more broadly;

16 (5) at the heart of a strong election cycle is the
17 professionalism of the election management body
18 and an empowered civil society;

19 (6) the development of local expertise via peer-
20 to-peer learning and exchanges promotes the inde-
21 pendence of such bodies from internal and external
22 influence; and

23 (7) supporting the efforts of peoples in democ-
24 ratizing societies to build more representative gov-

1 ernments in their respective countries is in the na-
2 tional interest of the United States.

3 **SEC. 3. GLOBAL ELECTORAL EXCHANGE.**

4 (a) GLOBAL ELECTORAL EXCHANGE.—The Sec-
5 retary of State is authorized to establish and administer
6 a Global Electoral Exchange Program to promote the utili-
7 zation of sound election administration practices around
8 the world.

9 (b) PURPOSE.—The purpose of the Global Electoral
10 Exchange Program described in subsection (a) shall in-
11 clude the promotion and exchange of international best
12 election practices, including in the following areas:

- 13 (1) Cybersecurity.
- 14 (2) Results transmission.
- 15 (3) Transparency of electoral data.
- 16 (4) Election dispute resolution.
- 17 (5) The elimination of discriminatory registra-
18 tion practices and electoral irregularities.
- 19 (6) Equitable access to polling places, voter
20 education information, and voting mechanisms (in-
21 cluding by persons with disabilities).
- 22 (7) Other sound election administration prac-
23 tices.

24 (c) EXCHANGE OF ELECTORAL AUTHORITIES.—

1 (1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of State may,
2 in consultation, as appropriate, with the Adminis-
3 trator of the United States Agency for International
4 Development, make grants to any United States-
5 based organization described in section 501(c)(3) of
6 the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 and exempt from
7 tax under section 501(a) of such Code with experi-
8 ence in and a primary focus on foreign comparative
9 election systems or subject matter expertise in the
10 administration or integrity of such systems that sub-
11 mits an application in such form, and satisfying
12 such requirements, as the Secretary may require.

13 (2) TYPES OF GRANTS.—An organization de-
14 scribed in paragraph (1) may receive a grant for one
15 or more of the following purposes:

16 (A) To design and implement programs
17 bringing election administrators and officials,
18 including government officials, poll workers,
19 civil society representatives, members of the ju-
20 diciary, and others who participate in the orga-
21 nization and administration of public elections
22 in a foreign country that faces challenges to its
23 electoral process to the United States to study
24 election procedures in the United States for
25 educational purposes.

1 (B) To design and implement programs
2 taking the United States or another country's
3 election administrators and officials, including
4 government officials, poll workers, civil society
5 representatives, members of the judiciary, and
6 others who participate in the organization and
7 administration of public elections to countries
8 other than the United States to study and dis-
9 cuss election procedures for educational pur-
10 poses.

11 (3) LIMITS ON ACTIVITIES.—Activities adminis-
12 tered under the Global Electoral Exchange Program
13 may not—

14 (A) include observation of an election for
15 the purposes of assessing the validity or legit-
16 imacy of that election;

17 (B) facilitate any advocacy for a certain
18 electoral result by a grantee when participating
19 in the Program; or

20 (C) be carried out without proper consulta-
21 tion with State and local authorities in the
22 United States that administer elections.

23 (4) SENSE OF CONGRESS.—It is the sense of
24 Congress that the Secretary of State should estab-
25 lish and maintain a network of Global Electoral Ex-

1 change Program alumni, to promote communication
2 and further exchange of information regarding
3 sound election administration practices among cur-
4 rent and former Program participants.

5 (5) FURTHER LIMITS.—A recipient of a grant
6 under the Global Electoral Exchange Program may
7 use such grant for only the purpose for which such
8 grant was awarded, unless otherwise authorized by
9 the Secretary of State.

10 (6) NOT DUPLICATIVE.—Grants made under
11 this subsection may not be duplicative of any other
12 grants made under any other provision of law for
13 similar or related purposes.

14 (d) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There is
15 authorized to be appropriated for \$5,000,000 for each of
16 fiscal years 2022 through 2026 to carry out subsections
17 (a), (b), and (c).

18 **SEC. 4. CONGRESSIONAL OVERSIGHT.**

19 Not later than one year after the date of the enact-
20 ment of this Act and annually thereafter for two years,
21 the Secretary of State shall provide to the Committee on
22 Foreign Affairs of the House of Representatives and the
23 Committee on Foreign Relations of the Senate a briefing
24 on the status of any activities carried out pursuant to this

1 Act during the immediately preceding year, which shall in-
2 clude, among other information, the following:

3 (1) A summary of all exchanges conducted
4 under the Global Electoral Exchange Program pur-
5 suant to section 3, including information regarding
6 grantees, participants, and the locations where Pro-
7 gram activities were held.

8 (2) A description of the criteria used to select
9 grantees under the Global Electoral Exchange Pro-
10 gram.

11 (3) Any recommendations for the improvement
12 of the Global Electoral Exchange Program, based on
13 the purpose specified in section 3(b).

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