

117TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 4213

To establish the Young Southeast Asian Leaders Initiative, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

JUNE 29, 2021

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

A BILL

To establish the Young Southeast Asian Leaders Initiative,
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 “Young Southeast Asian
5 Leaders Initiative Act” or the “YSEALI Act”.

6 **SEC. 2. YOUNG SOUTHEAST ASIAN LEADERS INITIATIVE.**

7 (a) ESTABLISHMENT.—There is established in the
8 Department of State the Young Southeast Asian Leaders
9 Initiative (“YSEALI”) program.

1 (b) GOALS.—The YSEALI program shall seek to
2 build to capacity of young leaders in Southeast Asia to—

3 (1) support young leaders from Southeast Asia
4 by offering professional development and a global
5 network to share expertise, including in the areas of
6 civic engagement, economic empowerment and social
7 entrepreneurship, education and environmental
8 issues; and

9 (2) further strengthen the enduring partnership
10 between the United States and Southeast Asia and
11 connect United States experts with YSEALI partici-
12 pants.

13 (c) YSEALI PROGRAMS.—

14 (1) YSEALI ACADEMIC FELLOWS PROGRAM.—

15 There is established the YSEALI Academic Fellows
16 Program to bring students from YSEALI partner
17 countries to the United States for the purposes of
18 building practical expertise, leadership skills, and
19 professional networks relating to one or more of the
20 YSEALI themes. The Secretary of State may award
21 fellowships under the Academic Fellows Program to
22 eligible individuals based on the following:

23 (A) Citizenship and residency in a
24 YSEALI partner country.

1 (B) Status as a full-time undergraduate
2 student, or recent graduate of college, univer-
3 sity, or other institutions of higher learning.

4 (C) Other criteria determined appropriate
5 by the Secretary.

6 (2) YSEALI PROFESSIONAL FELLOWS PRO-
7 GRAM.—There is established the YSEALI Profes-
8 sional Fellows Program to bring professionals from
9 YSEALI partner countries to the United States for
10 the purposes of building practical expertise, leader-
11 ship skills, and professional networks relating to one
12 or more of the YSEALI themes. The Secretary of
13 State may award fellowships under the Professional
14 Fellows Program to eligible individuals based on the
15 following:

16 (A) Citizenship and residency in a
17 YSEALI partner country.

18 (B) Status as an emerging leader in gov-
19 ernment, civil society, or the private sector, and
20 demonstrated expertise relating to one or more
21 of the YSEALI themes.

22 (C) Current employment, and two or more
23 years of professional work experience relevant
24 to one or more YSEALI themes.

1 (D) Other criteria determined appropriate
2 by the Secretary.

3 (3) OTHER INITIATIVES.—The Secretary of
4 State may designate other initiatives as YSEALI
5 initiatives under this section if they advance the
6 goals of the YSEALI program as described in sub-
7 section (b).

8 (d) ACTIVITIES.—

9 (1) UNITED STATES-BASED ACTIVITIES.—The
10 Secretary of State shall oversee all United States-
11 based activities carried out under the YSEALI pro-
12 gram, including the participation of YSEALI Aca-
13 demic Fellows in a program at a United States uni-
14 versity or college, and the participation of YSEALI
15 Professional Fellows at United States private and
16 public sector organizations for individually tailored
17 work placements. Both fellowships may include site
18 visits, professional networking opportunities, leader-
19 ship training, community service, and organized cul-
20 tural activities, as appropriate.

21 (2) SOUTHEAST ASIA-BASED ACTIVITIES.—The
22 Secretary of State should continue to support over-
23 seas initiatives of the program, including the fol-
24 lowing:

1 (A) Quality leadership training, profes-
2 sional development, and networking opportuni-
3 ties for YSEALI alumni.

4 (B) Reciprocal exchanges for YSEALI
5 Professional Fellows Program's United States
6 professional hosts and interlocutors to support
7 post-United States exchange action plans and
8 other related public diplomacy goals, as appro-
9 priate.

10 (C) Opportunities for networking with
11 YSEALI alumni and professionals and experts
12 who are American and Southeast Asian.

13 (D) The YSEALI Regional Workshop pro-
14 gram, offering networking, mentoring, hands-on
15 training, and the tools necessary to lead com-
16 munities in addressing economic, environ-
17 mental, educational, and civic engagement
18 issues.

19 (E) The YSEALI Seeds for the Future
20 program, providing small, competitive grants to
21 young leaders in Southeast Asia to improve
22 their communities, countries, and the region to-
23 wards one or more of the themes of civic en-
24 gagement, economic empowerment and social

entrepreneurship, education, or environmental issues.

(F) The YSEALI Academy at Fulbright University Vietnam, offering executive-level seminars for entry to mid-level professionals around the themes of technology and innovation, public policy, and entrepreneurship.

(G) The YSEALI Women's Leadership Academy Program, enhancing people-to-people ties and engagement with young and emerging leaders by promoting gender equality and advancing the status of women and girls, such as in the public health sector.

(3) ALUMNI PLATFORM.—The Secretary of State is authorized to convene current YSEALI participants and YSEALI alumni through a platform to promote networking opportunities within the YSEALI community.

(4) IMPLEMENTATION.—To carry out this subsection, United States diplomatic and consular posts, the Secretary of State, and agency external partners managing and implementing the YSEALI program—

(A) shall promote United States policy goals in Southeast Asia by providing tools and

resources to help young Southeast Asian leaders develop important skills and connections, including through online campaigns and public diplomacy initiatives;

(B) shall establish a system for monitoring, evaluating, and improving the YSEALI program; and

(C) may accept financial contributions from foundations, corporations, private donors, program partners, and implementing agency external partners intended to foster the goals of the YSEALI program.

(e) REPORTS.—

(1) STRATEGY.—The Secretary of State shall submit to the appropriate congressional committees a strategy for implementing the YSEALI program, including the following:

(A) YSEALI program goals, targets, and planned outcomes for each year and, separately, for the YSEALI program generally during the duration of its implementation.

(B) The continuation of YSEALI program monitoring and evaluation plan, including metrics for measuring YSEALI program

1 progress identification of annual YSEALI pro-
2 gram goals, and targets.

3 (2) ANNUAL REPORTS.—Not later than 1 year
4 after the date of the enactment of this Act, and an-
5 nually thereafter for 4 years, the Secretary of State
6 shall submit to the appropriate congressional com-
7 mittees and publish on a publicly available website
8 of the Department a report on—

9 (A) YSEALI program progress and an as-
10 sessment of the metrics, goals, targets, and out-
11 comes described in paragraph (1)(A), including
12 information relating to YSEALI program im-
13 plementation and outcome activities during the
14 year covered by each report; and

15 (B) recommendations for improvements or
16 amendments to the YSEALI program and
17 strategy, if any, that would improve their effec-
18 tiveness during subsequent years of YSEALI
19 program implementation.

20 (3) FINAL REPORT.—Not later than the date of
21 the submission of the last report required under
22 paragraph (2), the Secretary of State shall submit
23 to the appropriate congressional committees a final
24 assessment report that evaluates YSEALI program
25 implementation and outcomes during the entire du-

1 ration of YSEALI program operation, including rec-
2 ommendations regarding whether the YSEALI pro-
3 gram should be reauthorized and any changes that
4 would improve its effectiveness.

5 (f) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

6 (1) APPROPRIATE CONGRESSIONAL COMMIT-
7 TEES.—The term “appropriate congressional com-
8 mittees” means—

9 (A) the Committee on Foreign Affairs of
10 the House of Representatives;

11 (B) the Committee on Appropriations of
12 the House of Representatives;

13 (C) the Committee on Foreign Relations of
14 the Senate; and

15 (D) the Committee on Appropriations of
16 the Senate.

17 (2) IMPLEMENTING AGENCY EXTERNAL PART-
18 NERS.—The term “implementing agency external
19 partners” means any external partner that is not a
20 United States Government agency, and may include
21 one or more of the following entities:

22 (A) Local or multinational corporations.

23 (B) Nongovernmental organizations.

24 (C) Universities.

25 (D) Regional institutions.

1 (3) YSEALI THEME.—The term “YSEALI
2 theme” means—

3 (A) civic engagement;

4 (B) economic empowerment and social en-
5 trepreneurship;

6 (C) education;

7 (D) environmental issues; or

8 (E) any other theme included by the Sec-
9 retary of State.

10 (4) YSEALI PARTNER COUNTRIES.—The term
11 “YSEALI partner countries” includes each member
12 country of the Association of Southeast Asian Na-
13 tions and each other country or political entity the
14 Secretary of State determines appropriate to include
15 in the programs established under this section.

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