

115TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

H. R. 5274

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 14, 2018

Mr. CASTRO of Texas (for himself, Mr. MEADOWS, Mr. PRICE of North Carolina, and Mr. ROSKAM) 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”.

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 American interests, as stable democracies
8 provide new market opportunities, improve global
9 health outcomes, and promote economic freedom and
10 regional security;

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

15 (4) inclusive elections strengthen the credibility
16 and stability of democracies more broadly, as demo-
17 cratic institutions flourish when representative of all
18 groups of society;

19 (5) at the heart of a strong election cycle is the
20 professionalism of the election management body
21 and an empowered civil society; and

22 (6) the development of local expertise via peer-
23 to-peer learning and exchanges promotes the inde-
24 pendence of such bodies from internal and external
25 influence.

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

2 (a) GLOBAL ELECTORAL EXCHANGE.—The Sec-
3 retary of State shall establish and administer a Global
4 Electoral Exchange Program to promote the utilization of
5 sound election administration practices in the United
6 States and foreign countries.

7 (b) PURPOSE.—The purpose of the Global Electoral
8 Exchange Program described in subsection (a) shall in-
9 clude the promotion and exchange of international best
10 election practices, including in the areas of cybersecurity,
11 results transmission, transparency of electoral data, elec-
12 tion dispute resolution, the elimination of discriminatory
13 registration practices and electoral irregularities, and
14 other sound election administration practices.

15 (c) EXCHANGE OF ELECTORAL AUTHORITIES.—

16 (1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of State may,
17 in consultation, as appropriate, with the United
18 States Agency for International Development and re-
19 gionally focused independent agencies, make grants
20 to any United States-based organization described in
21 section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of
22 1986 and exempt from tax under section 501(a) of
23 such Code with experience in comparative election
24 systems or subject matter expertise in the areas of
25 election administration or electoral integrity that

1 submits an application in such form, and satisfying
2 such requirements, as the Secretary may require.

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

6 (A) To design and implement programs
7 bringing election administrators and officials,
8 including government officials, polling workers,
9 civil society representatives, members of the ju-
10 diciary, and others who participate in the orga-
11 nization and administration of an election in a
12 foreign country to the United States to study
13 election procedures in the United States for
14 educational purposes.

15 (B) To design and implement programs
16 taking United States or another country's elec-
17 tion administrators and officials, including gov-
18 ernment officials, polling workers, civil society
19 representatives, members of the judiciary, and
20 others who participate in the organization and
21 administration of elections for public office in
22 the United States or such other countries to
23 foreign countries to study election procedures in
24 such countries for educational purposes.

1 (3) COORDINATION.—The Secretary of State
2 shall coordinate with State and local governments in
3 the United States, in addition to the governments of
4 United States territories, to conduct exchanges
5 under this section and may enter into memorandums
6 of understanding with such governments to guide
7 participation by such governments in the Global
8 Electoral Exchange Program.

9 (4) LIMITS ON ACTIVITIES.—Activities adminis-
10 tered under the Global Electoral Exchange Program
11 may not—

12 (A) include election observation for the
13 purposes of discussing the validity or legitimacy
14 of an election; or

15 (B) facilitate any advocacy for a certain
16 electoral result by a grantee when participating
17 in the Program.

18 (5) FURTHER LIMITS.—A recipient of a grant
19 under the Global Electoral Exchange Program may
20 use such grant for only the purpose for which such
21 grant was awarded, unless otherwise authorized by
22 the Secretary of State.

23 (6) NOT DUPLICATIVE.—Grants made under
24 this subsection may not be duplicative of any other

1 grants made under any other provision of law for
2 similar or related purposes.

3 **SEC. 4. REPORT.**

4 (a) INTERNET.—The Secretary of State shall main-
5 tain a publically available Department of State website de-
6 tailing the Global Electoral Exchange Program, including
7 a list of grants awarded under the Program and the
8 amount awarded in each such grant, each annual report
9 required under subsection (c), and other information at
10 the discretion of the Secretary.

11 (b) NOTIFICATION OF GRANTS.—Not later than 30
12 days after each grant award under the Global Electoral
13 Exchange Program under section 3, the Secretary of State
14 shall publish on the website described in subsection (a)
15 a summary of such grant, including criteria for selecting
16 the grantee and any relevant agreements between the Sec-
17 retary of State and foreign governments, State and local
18 governments in the United States, or the governments of
19 United States territories that are associated with such
20 grant. The Secretary shall notify the Committee on For-
21 eign Affairs of the House of Representatives and the Com-
22 mittee on Foreign Relations of the Senate of such publica-
23 tion.

24 (c) ANNUAL REPORTS.—

1 (1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than one year
2 after the date of the enactment of this Act and every
3 year thereafter, the Secretary of State shall publish
4 on the website described in subsection (a) a report
5 on the Global Electoral Exchange Program and no-
6 tify the Committee on Foreign Affairs of the House
7 of Representatives and the Committee on Foreign
8 Relations of the Senate of such report.

9 (2) ELEMENTS.—The reports required by para-
10 graph (1) shall include the following:

11 (A) A summary of all exchanges conducted
12 under the Global Electoral Exchange Program,
13 including criteria used to select grantees.

14 (B) A summary of all memorandum of un-
15 derstandings with States, local governments,
16 and territories in accordance with section
17 3(e)(3).

18 (d) ANNUAL RECOMMENDATIONS.—In conjunction
19 with the annual reports required under subsection (c), the
20 Secretary of State may provide recommendations for the
21 improvement of the Global Electoral Exchange Program,
22 based on the purposes under section 3(b), in a written re-
23 port to the Committee on Foreign Affairs of the House

1 of Representatives and the Committee on Foreign Rela-
2 tions of the Senate.

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