H. R. 753

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

JANUARY 24, 2019

Mr. CASTRO of Texas (for himself and Mr. MEADOWS) 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.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the “Global Electoral Exchange Act of 2019”.

SEC. 2. SENSE OF CONGRESS.

It is the sense of Congress that—

(1) recent elections globally have illustrated the urgent need for the promotion and exchange of international best election practices, particularly in
the areas of cybersecurity, results transmission, transparency of electoral data, election dispute resolution, and the elimination of discriminatory registration practices and other electoral irregularities;

(2) the advancement of democracy worldwide promotes American interests, as stable democracies provide new market opportunities, improve global health outcomes, and promote economic freedom and regional security;

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

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

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

(6) the development of local expertise via peer-to-peer learning and exchanges promotes the independence of such bodies from internal and external influence; and

(7) supporting the efforts of peoples in democratizing societies to build more representative gov-
ernments in their respective countries is in the na-
tional interest of the United States.

SEC. 3. GLOBAL ELECTORAL EXCHANGE.

(a) Global Electoral Exchange.—The Sec-
retary of State is authorized to establish and administer
a Global Electoral Exchange Program to promote the utili-
zation of sound election administration practices around
the world.

(b) Purpose.—The purpose of the Global Electoral
Exchange Program described in subsection (a) shall in-
clude the promotion and exchange of international best
election practices, including in the areas of—

(1) cybersecurity;
(2) results transmission;
(3) transparency of electoral data;
(4) election dispute resolution;
(5) the elimination of discriminatory registra-
tion practices and electoral irregularities;
(6) equitable access to polling places, voter edu-
cation information, and voting mechanisms (includ-
ing by persons with disabilities); and
(7) other sound election administration prac-
tices.

(c) Exchange of Electoral Authorities.—
(1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of State may, in consultation, as appropriate, with the United States Agency for International Development, make grants to any United States-based organization described in section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 and exempt from tax under section 501(a) of such Code with experience in and a primary focus on foreign comparative election systems or subject matter expertise in the administration or integrity of such systems that submits an application in such form, and satisfying such requirements, as the Secretary may require.

(2) TYPES OF GRANTS.—An organization described in paragraph (1) may receive a grant for one or more of the following purposes:

(A) To design and implement programs bringing election administrators and officials, including government officials, poll workers, civil society representatives, members of the judiciary, and others who participate in the organization and administration of public elections in a foreign country that faces challenges to its electoral process to the United States to study election procedures in the United States for educational purposes.
(B) To design and implement programs taking the United States or another country’s election administrators and officials, including government officials, poll workers, civil society representatives, members of the judiciary, and others who participate in the organization and administration of public elections to study and discuss election procedures for educational purposes.

(3) LIMITS ON ACTIVITIES.—Activities administered under the Global Electoral Exchange Program may not—

(A) include observation of an election for the purposes of assessing the validity or legitimacy of that election;

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

(C) be carried out without proper consultation with State and local authorities in the United States that administer elections.

(4) SENSE OF CONGRESS.—It is the sense of Congress that the Secretary of State should establish and maintain a network of Global Electoral Exchange Program alumni, to promote communication
and further exchange of information regarding
sound election administration practices among cur-
rent and former program participants.

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

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

SEC. 4. CONGRESSIONAL OVERSIGHT.

Not later than one year after the date of the enact-
ment of this Act and in each of the following two years
thereafter, the Secretary of State shall provide to the
Committee on Foreign Affairs of the House of Representa-
tives and the Committee on Foreign Relations of the Sen-
ate a briefing on the status of any activities carried out
pursuant to this Act during the preceding year, which
shall include, among other information, the following:

(1) A summary of all exchanges conducted
under the Global Electoral Exchange Program, in-
cluding information regarding grantees, participants,
and the locations where program activities were held.
(2) A description of the criteria used to select grantees under the Global Electoral Exchange Program.

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

SEC. 5. NO ADDITIONAL FUNDS AUTHORIZED.

No additional funds are authorized to be appropriated to carry out the requirements of this Act. Such requirements shall be carried out using amounts otherwise authorized to be appropriated.