

Suspend the Rules and Pass the Bill, H. R. 1500, with Amendments

(The amendments strike all after the enacting clause and insert a complete new text and a new title)

117TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 1500

To direct the Administrator of the United States Agency for International Development to submit to Congress a report on the impact of the COVID–19 pandemic on global basic education programs.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

MARCH 2, 2021

Ms. HOULAHAN (for herself, Mr. FITZPATRICK, and Mr. QUIGLEY) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Affairs

A BILL

To direct the Administrator of the United States Agency for International Development to submit to Congress a report on the impact of the COVID–19 pandemic on global basic education programs.

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 Learning Loss
5 Assessment Act of 2021”.

1 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

2 Congress finds the following:

3 (1) Before the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (com-
4 monly referred to as “COVID–19”) pandemic began,
5 258,000,000 children were out of school globally, in-
6 cluding 130,000,000 girls.

7 (2) Students already at a disadvantage before
8 COVID–19 will experience greater learning loss,
9 thereby worsening inequity and inequality.

10 (3) Approximately 90 percent of the world’s
11 student population—over 1,600,000,000 children
12 and youth—have had their education disrupted by
13 school closure due to COVID–19.

14 (4) School closures lead to interrupted learning,
15 poor nutrition, gaps in childcare, increased dropout
16 rates, exposure to violence, and social isolation.

17 (5) Up to 24,000,000 children are at risk of
18 dropping out of school permanently due to rising lev-
19 els of child poverty associated with the pandemic.

20 (6) School closure and remote learning is espe-
21 cially burdensome on girls, who are frequently ex-
22 pected to shoulder more household chores and re-
23 sponsibilities and are more vulnerable to gender-
24 based violence.

25 (7) During the Ebola epidemic, nationwide
26 school closures in Sierra Leone in 2014 led to in-

1 creased instances of sexual- and gender-based vio-
2 lence, teenage pregnancy, school dropout, and child
3 labor for girls.

4 (8) More than 60 percent of national distance
5 learning alternatives rely exclusively on online plat-
6 forms but two-thirds of the world's school aged chil-
7 dren, or 1,300,000,000 children aged 3 through 17,
8 do not have internet connection in their homes, and
9 schools and local learning centers also frequently
10 have inadequate internet connectivity. Eighty per-
11 cent of students in sub-Saharan Africa lack such ac-
12 cess, with an even higher rate for girls.

13 (9) Children and youth with disabilities are par-
14 ticularly vulnerable to the health, education, and so-
15 cioeconomic consequences of the pandemic. As a fur-
16 ther challenge, distance learning tools are not always
17 accessible to learners with disabilities or those with
18 complex learning needs, especially in poorer and
19 rural households.

20 (10) Before the COVID-19 pandemic, refugee
21 children were twice as likely to be out of school as
22 other youth, and school closures and a lack of access
23 to distance learning tools threaten to make the edu-
24 cation gap among refugee children even more severe.

1 (11) The economic downturn caused by the
2 COVID–19 pandemic could lead to an education fi-
3 nancing gap of \$77,000,000,000 in low- and middle-
4 income countries over the next 2 years.

5 (12) The economic cost of school closures could
6 be up to \$1,337 per student, which on a global scale
7 equates to approximately \$10,000,000,000,000 in
8 lost economic output over the coming generation.

9 **SEC. 3. STATEMENT OF POLICY.**

10 It is the policy of the United States that United
11 States-funded basic education programs operating in low-
12 and middle-income countries should seek to—

13 (1) provide inclusive learning opportunities for
14 students and teachers, especially for the most
15 marginalized, including girls, children with disabil-
16 ities, and previously out of school children;

17 (2) build local capacity and help countries
18 strengthen their education systems, including oppor-
19 tunities for early childhood development;

20 (3) improve the availability, delivery, and qual-
21 ity of education services from early childhood
22 through secondary education;

23 (4) improve equity and safety in education serv-
24 ices; and

1 (5) support the return of children to school who
2 have experienced interruptions in their education
3 due to the COVID–19 pandemic and work to enroll
4 previously out-of-school children and youth, particu-
5 larly the most marginalized.

6 **SEC. 4. REPORT.**

7 (a) **IN GENERAL.**—Not later than 180 days after the
8 date of the enactment of this Act, the Administrator of
9 the United States Agency for International Development,
10 acting through the Senior Coordinator for International
11 Basic Education Assistance and in consultation with the
12 Senior Coordinator for Gender Equality and Women’s
13 Empowerment, shall submit to the appropriate congres-
14 sional committees a report on the impact of the COVID–
15 19 pandemic on United States Agency for International
16 Development basic education programs.

17 (b) **MATTERS TO BE INCLUDED.**—The report re-
18 quired under subsection (a) shall include, at a minimum,
19 the following elements:

20 (1) An assessment of the impact of COVID–19
21 on such basic education programs, including the
22 magnitude of learning loss that will result from pro-
23 tracted school closures and the specific effects of
24 school and learning space closures on marginalized
25 children and youth, including girls, minority popu-

1 lations, displaced children, and those with disabil-
2 ities.

3 (2) An assessment comparing academic out-
4 comes of beneficiaries of United States Agency for
5 International Development basic education pro-
6 grams, as practical and appropriate, between those
7 that attend schools that remain closed or continue to
8 operate remotely since the start of the COVID–19
9 pandemic and schools that have resumed in-person
10 instruction.

11 (3) A description of the effectiveness, cost, ac-
12 cessibility, and reach of the most commonly used
13 forms of distance learning in low- and middle-income
14 countries and low-resource contexts.

15 (4) A description of efforts to pivot and adapt
16 such basic education programs during the COVID–
17 19 pandemic, including an overview of existing data
18 on funding and programmatic focus disaggregated
19 by gender, country, education level, and disability.

20 (5) An identification and description of any
21 gaps in, or barriers to, reaching and educating
22 marginalized populations, such as girls, children
23 with disabilities, displaced children, or other children
24 adversely affected by the COVID–19 pandemic with
25 distance learning interventions.

1 (6) A description of the United States Agency
2 for International Development’s plan and needed au-
3 thorities and resources to prevent degradation of
4 such basic education programs and to support, as
5 necessary and appropriate, continued distance learn-
6 ing interventions, safe school reopenings, assess-
7 ments of student learning levels, remedial and accel-
8 erated learning, re-enrollment campaigns for out-of-
9 school children and youth, and education system
10 strengthening and resilience-building efforts.

11 (7) An analysis of the coordination between the
12 United States Agency for International Development
13 and other actors in global basic education policy and
14 programming to provide education during the
15 COVID–19 pandemic, including partner organiza-
16 tions, faith based-organizations, donors, and multi-
17 lateral organizations.

18 (8) A description of opportunities to partner
19 and support efforts to expand access to digital infra-
20 structure, internet connectivity, and learning re-
21 sources in areas that lack access to digital and re-
22 mote learning infrastructure and resources, includ-
23 ing rural and remote communities.

24 (c) PUBLIC AVAILABILITY.—The report required by
25 subsection (a) shall be made available to the public.

1 (d) APPROPRIATE CONGRESSIONAL COMMITTEES
2 DEFINED.—In this section, the term “appropriate con-
3 gressional committees” means—

4 (1) the Committee on Foreign Affairs and the
5 Committee on Appropriations of the House of Rep-
6 resentatives; and

7 (2) the Committee on Foreign Relations and
8 the Committee on Appropriations of the Senate.

Amend the title so as to read: “A bill to direct the Administrator of the United States Agency for International Development to submit to Congress a report on the impact of the COVID–19 pandemic on United States Agency for International Development basic education programs.”.