

**Suspend the Rules and Pass the Bill, H. R. 7159, With an  
Amendment**

**(The amendment strikes all after the enacting clause and inserts a  
complete new text)**

118TH CONGRESS  
2D SESSION

# H. R. 7159

To bolster United States engagement with the Pacific Islands region, and  
for other purposes.

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## IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

JANUARY 31, 2024

Mr. CASE (for himself, Mr. BARR, Mrs. RADEWAGEN, Mrs. WAGNER, Mr. MOYLAN, Mr. SABLAN, Mr. WOMACK, Mr. KRISHNAMOORTHY, Ms. PORTER, Ms. TOKUDA, Ms. STRICKLAND, Mr. NORCROSS, Mr. BERA, Mr. DUNN of Florida, and Mr. MEEKS) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Affairs

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## A BILL

To bolster United States engagement with the Pacific Islands  
region, 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 “Pacific Partnership  
5 Act”.

1 **SEC. 2. SENSE OF CONGRESS.**

2 It is the sense of Congress as follows:

3 (1) The United States has longstanding and en-  
4 during cultural, historic, economic, strategic, and  
5 people-to-people connections with the Pacific Islands,  
6 based on shared values, cultural histories, common  
7 interests, and a commitment to fostering mutual un-  
8 derstanding and cooperation.

9 (2) Successive United States administrations  
10 have recognized the critical importance of the Pacific  
11 Islands, to the world in high-level strategic docu-  
12 ments, including the—

13 (A) 2015 National Security Strategy,  
14 which first declared the rebalance to Asia and  
15 the Pacific, affirmed the United States as a Pa-  
16 cific nation, and paved the way for subsequent  
17 United States engagement with the Pacific Is-  
18 lands;

19 (B) 2017 National Security Strategy,  
20 which includes a commitment to “shore up  
21 fragile partner states in the Pacific Islands re-  
22 gion to reduce their vulnerability to economic  
23 fluctuations and natural disasters”;

24 (C) 2019 Indo-Pacific Strategy Report,  
25 which identified the Pacific Islands as “critical

1 to United States strategy because of our shared  
2 values, interests, and commitments”;

3 (D) 2022 Indo-Pacific Strategy Report,  
4 which recognized the need to engage further  
5 with the Pacific Islands on shared security  
6 goals; and

7 (E) 2022 Strategy for Pacific Partnership,  
8 which outlined goals and methods for deepening  
9 the United States partnerships with Pacific Is-  
10 land nations.

11 (3) The United States Government should fur-  
12 ther develop, expand, and support a comprehensive  
13 and multifaceted United States policy for the Pacific  
14 Islands that—

15 (A) promotes peace, security, and pros-  
16 perity for all countries that respects the sov-  
17 ereignty and political independence of all na-  
18 tions;

19 (B) preserves the Pacific Ocean as a cor-  
20 ridor for international maritime economic op-  
21 portunities and growth and promotes sustain-  
22 able development;

23 (C) supports regional efforts to address  
24 shared challenges, including by strengthening

1 resilience to natural disasters and stewardship  
2 of natural resources; and

3 (D) strengthens democratic governance  
4 and the rule of law, and promotes human rights  
5 and the preservation of the region’s cultural  
6 heritages.

7 (4) The United States should support the vi-  
8 sion, values, and objectives of existing regional mul-  
9 tilateral institutions and frameworks, such as the  
10 Pacific Islands Forum and the Pacific Community.

11 (5) The United States should work closely with  
12 United States allies and partners with existing rela-  
13 tionships and interests in the Pacific Islands, such  
14 as Australia, Japan, South Korea, New Zealand,  
15 and Taiwan, and regional institutions like the Pa-  
16 cific Islands Forum.

17 **SEC. 3. STRATEGY FOR PACIFIC PARTNERSHIP.**

18 (a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than January 1, 2026,  
19 and again not later than January 1, 2030, the President,  
20 in coordination with the Secretary of State, shall develop  
21 and submit to the appropriate congressional committees  
22 a strategy entitled the “Strategy for Pacific Partnership”  
23 (in this section referred to as the “Strategy”).

24 (b) MATTERS TO BE INCLUDED.—The Strategy shall  
25 include each of the following:

1           (1) A description of overarching goals for  
2 United States engagement in the Pacific Islands re-  
3 gion, including United States diplomatic posts, de-  
4 fense posture, and economic engagement.

5           (2) An assessment of threats and pressures to  
6 the Pacific Islands region including those caused by  
7 factors such as—

8                   (A) natural disasters;

9                   (B) illegal, unreported, and unregulated  
10 fishing;

11                   (C) non-United States military presence  
12 and activity;

13                   (D) developmental challenges;

14                   (E) economic coercion and corruption; and

15                   (F) other factors assessed to be causing a  
16 direct risk to the United States national inter-  
17 ests in the Pacific Islands.

18           (3) A plan to address the threats assessed pur-  
19 suant to paragraph (2).

20           (4) An analysis of the needs and goals ex-  
21 pressed by governments of the Pacific Islands re-  
22 gion, including at or through multilateral institu-  
23 tions, evaluated in light of the United States na-  
24 tional interests.

1           (5) A plan for the resources necessary for the  
2 United States to meet its goals in the Pacific Islands  
3 region.

4           (6) Mechanisms, including existing forums, for  
5 coordinating and cooperating on shared goals among  
6 the following, as appropriate:

7           (A) the governments of Pacific Island  
8 countries;

9           (B) regional partners in the Pacific Islands  
10 region, including multilateral forums and orga-  
11 nizations, such as the Pacific Islands Forum;

12           (C) civil society in the Pacific Islands; and

13           (D) United States subnational govern-  
14 ments in the Pacific.

15       (c) CONSULTATION.—In developing the Strategy, the  
16 President should consult, as appropriate, with—

17           (1) relevant United States governmental agen-  
18 cies;

19           (2) regional organizations, such as the Pacific  
20 Islands Forum, the Pacific Islands Development  
21 Program, the Pacific Community, the Forum Fish-  
22 eries Agency, and the Secretariat of the Pacific Re-  
23 gional Environment Programme;

24           (3) the governments of the countries in the Pa-  
25 cific Islands;

- 1 (4) civil society stakeholders;
- 2 (5) United States allies and partners; and
- 3 (6) United States Pacific territories and States.

4 **SEC. 4. EXTENSION OF DIPLOMATIC IMMUNITIES TO THE**  
5 **PACIFIC ISLANDS FORUM.**

6 The provisions of the International Organizations Im-  
7 munities Act (22 U.S.C. 288 et seq.) may be extended to  
8 the Pacific Islands Forum in the same manner, to the  
9 same extent, and subject to the same conditions as such  
10 provisions may be extended to a public international orga-  
11 nization in which the United States participates pursuant  
12 to any treaty or under the authority of any Act of Con-  
13 gress authorizing such participation or making an appro-  
14 priation for such participation.

15 **SEC. 5. REPORTS ON IMPLEMENTATION.**

16 (a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 180 days after the  
17 date of submission of a strategy detailed in section 3(a),  
18 the President shall submit to the appropriate congres-  
19 sional committees an implementation report—

20 (1) with a proposed timeline for implementation  
21 of the strategy described in section 3(a) of this Act;

22 (2) detailing the assessed number of full-time  
23 equivalent positions and contractors needed to  
24 achieve the goals laid out in the strategy described  
25 in section 3(a) of this Act;

1           (3) describing any institutional or structural re-  
2           organizations suggested to help carry out the strat-  
3           egy described in section 3(a) of this Act; and

4           (4) if necessary, identifying additional funding  
5           needed to support resource levels to carry out the  
6           strategy described in 3(a).

7           (b) CONSOLIDATION.—A report required by this sub-  
8           section may be consolidated with any other report required  
9           to be submitted by the same Federal official on the same  
10          or similar date as the requirement under this subsection.

11 **SEC. 6. ALLIES AND PARTNERS IN THE PACIFIC ISLANDS**  
12 **REGION.**

13          (a) IN GENERAL.—The President, in consultation  
14          with the Secretary of State, and the relevant heads of  
15          other Federal departments and agencies, should consult  
16          and coordinate with allies and partners in the Pacific Is-  
17          lands region, including Australia, Japan, New Zealand,  
18          Taiwan, and regional institutions, such as the Pacific Is-  
19          lands Forum, the Pacific Islands Development Program,  
20          the Pacific Community and Secretariat for the Pacific Re-  
21          gional Environment Programme, with respect to programs  
22          to provide assistance to the Pacific Islands, including for  
23          purposes of—

24                 (1) deconflicting programming;



1           (2) ensuring that any programming does not  
2           adversely affect the absorptive capacity of the Pa-  
3           cific Islands;

4           (3) ensuring complementary programs benefit  
5           the Pacific Islands to the maximum extent prac-  
6           ticable; and

7           (4) ensuring that programming aligns with re-  
8           gional development goals to promote a shared vision  
9           for the future of the Pacific Islands.

10          (b) FORMAL CONSULTATIVE PROCESS.—The Presi-  
11          dent should establish a formal consultative process with  
12          such regional allies and partners to coordinate with re-  
13          spect to such programs and future-years programming.

14          **SEC. 7. REPORTING.**

15          (a) UPDATES OF CERTAIN REPORTS.—The Secretary  
16          of State, in coordination with the heads of other Federal  
17          departments and agencies as appropriate, shall annually  
18          update the reports listed in subsection (b) to include with-  
19          in the scope of such reports a regional discussion of  
20          transnational crime affecting the Pacific Islands.

21          (b) REPORTS LISTED.—The reports listed in this  
22          subsection are the following:

23                 (1) The International Narcotics Control Strat-  
24                 egy report required by section 489 of the Foreign  
25                 Assistance Act of 1961 (22 U.S.C. 2291h).

1           (2) The Improving International Fisheries Man-  
2           agement report required by section 607 of title VI  
3           of the Fisheries Act of 1995 (16 U.S.C. 1826h).

4           (3) The Trafficking in Persons report sub-  
5           mitted under section 110 of the Trafficking Victims  
6           Protection Act of 2000 (22 U.S.C. 7107).

7 **SEC. 8. DEFINITIONS.**

8           In this Act:

9           (1) **APPROPRIATE CONGRESSIONAL COMMIT-**  
10          **TEES.**—The term “appropriate congressional com-  
11          mittees” means—

12                   (A) the Committee on Foreign Affairs of  
13                   the House of Representatives; and

14                   (B) the Committee on Foreign Relations of  
15                   the Senate.

16          (2) **PACIFIC ISLANDS; PACIFIC ISLANDS RE-**  
17          **GION.**—The term “Pacific Islands” and “Pacific Is-  
18          lands region” mean the nations, territories, and  
19          other jurisdictions in the Pacific Ocean within the  
20          broad groupings of Melanesia, Micronesia, and Poly-  
21          nesia.