

**SEAN AND DAVID GOLDMAN INTERNATIONAL  
CHILD ABDUCTION PREVENTION AND RETURN  
ACT OF 2013**

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**MARKUP**  
BEFORE THE  
**COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS**  
**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**  
ONE HUNDRED THIRTEENTH CONGRESS

FIRST SESSION

ON

**H.R. 3212**

OCTOBER 10, 2013

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**SEAN AND DAVID GOLDMAN INTERNATIONAL  
CHILD ABDUCTION PREVENTION AND  
RETURN ACT OF 2013**

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**THURSDAY, OCTOBER 10, 2013**

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,  
COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS,  
*Washington, DC.*

The committee met, pursuant to notice, at 9:35 a.m., in room 2172 Rayburn House Office Building, Hon. Edward Royce (chairman of the committee) presiding.

Chairman ROYCE. Pursuant to notice, we meet today to mark up the bipartisan bill HR 3212.

The clerk will report the bill.

Ms. MARTER. H.R. 3212, a bill to ensure compliance with the 1980 Hague Convention on the Civil Aspects of International Child Abduction by countries with which the United States enjoys reciprocal obligations, to establish procedures for the prompt return of children abducted to other countries, and for other purposes.

[H.R. 3212 follows:]

113TH CONGRESS  
1ST SESSION

# H. R. 3212

To ensure compliance with the 1980 Hague Convention on the Civil Aspects of International Child Abduction by countries with which the United States enjoys reciprocal obligations, to establish procedures for the prompt return of children abducted to other countries, and for other purposes.

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## IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

SEPTEMBER 28, 2013

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey (for himself, Mr. MORAN, Mr. WOLF, Mr. MEADOWS, Mr. KENNEDY, Mr. SHERMAN, Mr. LIPINSKI, Mr. HOLDING, and Mr. BURGESS) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Affairs

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## A BILL

To ensure compliance with the 1980 Hague Convention on the Civil Aspects of International Child Abduction by countries with which the United States enjoys reciprocal obligations, to establish procedures for the prompt return of children abducted to other countries, 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,*

1 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE AND TABLE OF CONTENTS.**

2 (a) SHORT TITLE.—This Act may be cited as the  
 3 “Sean and David Goldman International Child Abduction  
 4 Prevention and Return Act of 2013”.

5 (b) TABLE OF CONTENTS.—The table of contents for  
 6 this Act is as follows:

- Sec. 1. Short title and table of contents.
- Sec. 2. Findings; sense of Congress; purposes.
- Sec. 3. Definitions.
- Sec. 4. Funding.

**TITLE I—DEPARTMENT OF STATE ACTIONS**

- Sec. 101. Annual report.
- Sec. 102. Standards and assistance.
- Sec. 103. Memorandum of understanding.
- Sec. 104. Notification of congressional representatives.

**TITLE II—PRESIDENTIAL ACTIONS**

- Sec. 201. Presidential actions in response to unresolved cases.
- Sec. 202. Presidential actions in response to patterns of noncooperation in cases of international child abductions.
- Sec. 203. Consultations with foreign governments.
- Sec. 204. Report to Congress.
- Sec. 205. Presidential actions.
- Sec. 206. Presidential waiver.
- Sec. 207. Publication in Federal Register.
- Sec. 208. Termination of Presidential actions.

7 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS; SENSE OF CONGRESS; PURPOSES.**

8 (a) FINDINGS.—Congress finds the following:

9 (1) Sean Goldman, a United States citizen and  
 10 resident of New Jersey, was abducted from the  
 11 United States in 2004 and separated from his fa-  
 12 ther, David Goldman, who spent nearly six years  
 13 battling for the return of his son from Brazil before  
 14 Sean was finally returned to Mr. Goldman’s custody  
 15 on December 24, 2009.

1           (2) The Department of State's Office of Chil-  
2       dren's Issues, which serves as the Central Authority  
3       of the United States for the purposes of the 1980  
4       Hague Convention on the Civil Aspects of Inter-  
5       national Child Abduction, has received thousands of  
6       requests since 2007 for assistance in the return to  
7       the United States of children who have been ab-  
8       ducted by a parent or other legal guardian to an-  
9       other country. For a variety of reasons reflecting the  
10      significant obstacles to the recovery of abducted chil-  
11      dren, as well as the legal and factual complexity in-  
12      volving such cases, not all cases are reported to the  
13      Central Authority of the United States.

14          (3) More than one thousand outgoing inter-  
15      national child abductions are reported to the Central  
16      Authority of the United States every year.

17          (4) Only about half of the children abducted  
18      from the United States to countries with which the  
19      United States enjoys reciprocal obligations under the  
20      Hague Abduction Convention are returned to the  
21      United States.

22          (5) The United States and Convention coun-  
23      tries have expressed their desire, through the Hague  
24      Abduction Convention, "to protect children inter-  
25      nationally from the harmful effects of their wrongful



1 removal or retention and to establish procedures to  
2 ensure their prompt return to the State of their ha-  
3 bitual residence, as well as to secure protection for  
4 rights of access.”.

5 (6) Compliance by the United States and Con-  
6 vention countries depends on the actions of their  
7 designated central authorities, the performance of  
8 their judiciaries as reflected in the legal process and  
9 decisions rendered to enforce or effectuate the  
10 Hague Abduction Convention, and the ability and  
11 willingness of their law enforcement to insure the  
12 swift enforcement of orders rendered pursuant to the  
13 Hague Abduction Convention.

14 (7) According to data compiled by the Central  
15 Authority of the United States, approximately 40  
16 percent of abduction cases and access cases involve  
17 children taken from the United States to countries  
18 with which the United States does not have Hague  
19 Abduction Convention obligations or other agree-  
20 ments relating to the resolution of abduction cases  
21 and access cases.

22 (8) According to the Department of State’s  
23 April 2010 Report on Compliance with the Hague  
24 Convention on the Civil Aspects of International  
25 Child Abduction, “parental child abduction jeopard-

1       izes the child and has substantial long-term con-  
2       sequences for both the child and the left-behind par-  
3       ent.”.

4       (9) Abducted children are at risk of serious  
5       emotional and psychological problems and have been  
6       found to experience anxiety, eating problems, night-  
7       mares, mood swings, sleep disturbances, aggressive  
8       behavior, resentment, guilt and fearfulness, and as  
9       adults may struggle with identity issues, personal re-  
10      lationships, and parenting.

11      (10) Left-behind parents may encounter sub-  
12      stantial psychological and emotional problems, and  
13      few have the extraordinary financial resources nec-  
14      essary to pursue individual civil or criminal remedies  
15      in both the United States and a foreign country,  
16      even where available, or to engage in repeated for-  
17      eign travel to attempt to procure the return of their  
18      children by evoking diplomatic and humanitarian  
19      remedies.

20      (11) Left-behind parents who are military par-  
21      ents may be unable to leave their military duties to  
22      pursue multinational litigation or take leave to at-  
23      tend multiple court proceedings, and foreign authori-  
24      ties may not schedule proceedings to accommodate  
25      such duties.

1 (b) SENSE OF CONGRESS.—It is the sense of Con-  
2 gress that the United States should set a strong example  
3 for Convention countries in the timely location and return  
4 of abducted children in the United States whose habitual  
5 residence is not the United States.

6 (c) PURPOSES.—The purposes of this Act are to—

7 (1) protect children whose habitual residence is  
8 the United States from the harmful effects of abduc-  
9 tion and to assist left-behind parents to have access  
10 to their abducted child in a safe and predictable  
11 manner, wherever the child is located, while an ab-  
12 duction case is pending;

13 (2) provide left-behind parents, including mili-  
14 tary parents, their advocates, and judges the infor-  
15 mation they need to enhance the resolution of abduc-  
16 tion cases and access cases through established legal  
17 procedures, risk assessment tools, and the practical  
18 means for overcoming obstacles to recovering an ab-  
19 ducted child;

20 (3) establish measured, effective, and predict-  
21 able actions to be undertaken by the President on  
22 behalf of abducted children whose habitual residence  
23 is the United States at the time of the abduction;

24 (4) promote an international consensus that it  
25 is in the interest of children to have any issues re-

lated to their care and custody determined in the country of their habitual residence;

(5) provide the necessary training for officials of the United States Armed Forces and the Department of Defense to establish policies and provide services to military parents that address the unique circumstances of abductions and violations of rights of access that may occur with regard to military dependent children; and

(6) encourage the effective implementation of international mechanisms, particularly those established pursuant to the Hague Abduction Convention, to achieve reciprocity in the resolution of abductions and to protect children from the harmful effects of an abduction.

**SEC. 3. DEFINITIONS.**

In this Act:

(1) **ABDUCTED CHILD.**—The term “abducted child” means a child who is the victim of an abduction.

(2) **ABDUCTION.**—The term “abduction” means—

(A) the alleged wrongful removal of a child from the child’s country of habitual residence;

1 (B) the alleged wrongful retention of a  
2 child outside the child's country of habitual res-  
3 idence; or

4 (C) the alleged wrongful removal or reten-  
5 tion of a military dependent child from the ex-  
6 ercise of rights of custody of a military parent.

7 (3) ABDUCTION CASE.—The term “abduction  
8 case” means a case involving an application filed  
9 with the Central Authority of the United States by  
10 a left-behind parent for the resolution of an abduc-  
11 tion.

12 (4) ACCESS CASE.—The term “access case”  
13 means a case involving an application filed with the  
14 Central Authority of the United States by a left-be-  
15 hind parent for the establishment of rights of access.

16 (5) ANNUAL REPORT.—The term “Annual Re-  
17 port” means the Annual Report on International  
18 Child Abduction required under section 101.

19 (6) APPLICATION.—The term “application”  
20 means—

21 (A) in the case of a Convention country,  
22 the application required pursuant to article 8 of  
23 the Hague Abduction Convention;

24 (B) in the case of an MOU country, the  
25 formal document required pursuant to the pro-

1       visions of the applicable MOU to request the re-  
2       turn of an abducted child or to request rights  
3       of access, as applicable; and

4               (C) in the case of a nonparty country, the  
5       formal request by the Central Authority of the  
6       United States to the Central Authority of such  
7       country requesting the return of an abducted  
8       child or for rights of access to an abducted  
9       child.

10       (7) APPROPRIATE CONGRESSIONAL COMMIT-  
11       TEES.—The term “appropriate congressional com-  
12       mittees” means the Committee on Foreign Affairs of  
13       the House of Representatives and the Committee on  
14       Foreign Relations of the Senate.

15       (8) CENTRAL AUTHORITY.—The term “Central  
16       Authority” means—

17               (A) in the case of a Convention country,  
18       the meaning given such term in article 6 of the  
19       Hague Abduction Convention;

20               (B) in the case of an MOU country, the of-  
21       ficial entity designated by the government of  
22       the MOU country within the applicable MOU  
23       pursuant to section 103(b)(1) to discharge the  
24       duties imposed on the entity in such MOU; and

1 (C) in the case of a nonparty country, the  
2 foreign ministry of such country.

3 (9) CHILD.—The term “child” means an indi-  
4 vidual who has not attained the age of 16.

5 (10) CONVENTION COUNTRY.—The term “Con-  
6 vention country” means a country other than the  
7 United States that has ratified, acceded, or suc-  
8 ceeded to the Hague Abduction Convention and with  
9 respect to which the United States has entered into  
10 a reciprocal agreement pursuant to the Hague Ab-  
11 duction Convention.

12 (11) HAGUE ABDUCTION CONVENTION.—The  
13 term “Hague Abduction Convention” means the  
14 Convention on the Civil Aspects of International  
15 Child Abduction, done at The Hague on October 25,  
16 1980.

17 (12) LEFT-BEHIND PARENT.—The term “left-  
18 behind parent” means an individual or entity, either  
19 individually or jointly, who alleges that an abduction  
20 has occurred that is in breach of rights of custody—

21 (A) attributed to such individual or entity,  
22 as applicable; and

23 (B) exercised at the time of the abduction  
24 or that would have been exercised but for the  
25 abduction.

1           (13) LEGAL RESIDENCE.—The term “legal resi-  
2       dence” means the congressional district and State in  
3       which an individual either is residing, or if an indi-  
4       vidual is residing temporarily outside the United  
5       States, the congressional district and State to which  
6       the individual intends to return.

7           (14) MILITARY DEPENDENT CHILD.—The term  
8       “military dependent child” means a child whose ha-  
9       bitual residence is the United States according to  
10      United States law even though the child is residing  
11      outside the United States with a military parent.

12          (15) MILITARY PARENT.—The term “military  
13      parent” means an individual who has rights of cus-  
14      tody over a child and who is serving outside the  
15      United States as a member of the United States  
16      Armed Forces.

17          (16) MOU.—The term “MOU” means a memo-  
18      randum of understanding between the United States  
19      and a country that is not a Convention country to  
20      resolve abduction cases and access cases.

21          (17) MOU COUNTRY.—The term “MOU coun-  
22      try” means a country with respect to which the  
23      United States has entered into an MOU.



1           (18) NONPARTY COUNTRY.—The term  
2 “nonparty country” means a country that is neither  
3 a Convention country nor an MOU country.

4           (19) PATTERN OF NONCOOPERATION.—

5           (A) IN GENERAL.—The term “pattern of  
6 noncooperation” means the persistent failure—

7                 (i) of a Convention country to imple-  
8 ment and abide by the provisions of the  
9 Hague Abduction Convention; and

10                (ii) of an MOU country to implement  
11 and abide by the provisions of the applica-  
12 ble MOU.

13           (B) CRITERIA.—Such persistent failure  
14 may be evidenced by one or more of the fol-  
15 lowing criteria:

16                 (i) The existence of 10 or more unre-  
17 solved abduction cases.

18                 (ii) The failure of the Central Author-  
19 ity of the country to fulfill its responsibil-  
20 ities pursuant to the Hague Abduction  
21 Convention or the MOU, as applicable.

22                 (iii) The failure of the judicial or ad-  
23 ministrative branch, as applicable, of the  
24 national government of the country to im-  
25 plement and comply with the provisions of

1 the Hague Abduction Convention or the  
2 MOU, as applicable.

3 (iv) The failure of law enforcement to  
4 locate abducted children or to enforce re-  
5 turn orders or determinations of rights of  
6 access rendered by the judicial or adminis-  
7 trative authorities of the national govern-  
8 ment of the country in abduction cases or  
9 access cases.

10 (20) RIGHTS OF ACCESS.—The term “rights of  
11 access” means the rights of contact between a child  
12 and a left-behind parent provided as a provisional  
13 measure while an abduction case is pending, by op-  
14 eration of law or by reason of judicial or administra-  
15 tive determination or by agreement having legal ef-  
16 fect, under the law of the country in which the child  
17 is located.

18 (21) RIGHTS OF CUSTODY.—The term “rights  
19 of custody” means rights of care and custody of an  
20 abducted child, including the right to determine the  
21 place of residence of an abducted child—

22 (A) attributed to an individual or entity,  
23 either individually or jointly, and

1 (B) arising by operation of law or by rea-  
2 son of a judicial or administrative decision, or  
3 by reason of an agreement having legal effect,  
4 under the law of the country in which the child was  
5 an habitual resident immediately before the abduc-  
6 tion.

7 (22) UNRESOLVED ABDUCTION CASE.—

8 (A) IN GENERAL.—Subject to subpara-  
9 graph (B), the term “unresolved abduction  
10 case” means an abduction case that remains  
11 unresolved for a period that exceeds 180 days  
12 after the date on which the completed applica-  
13 tion for return of the child is submitted for de-  
14 termination to the judicial or administrative au-  
15 thority, as applicable, in the country in which  
16 the child is located.

17 (B) RESOLUTION OF CASE.—An abduction  
18 case shall be considered to be resolved if—

19 (i) the child is returned to the country  
20 of habitual residence, pursuant to the  
21 Hague Abduction Convention or MOU, if  
22 applicable;

23 (ii) the judicial or administrative  
24 branch, as applicable, of the national gov-  
25 ernment of the country in which the child

1 is located has implemented and is com-  
2 plying with the provisions of the Hague  
3 Abduction Convention or the MOU, as ap-  
4 plicable, and a final determination is made  
5 by such judicial or administrative branch  
6 that the child will not be returned to the  
7 country of habitual residence; or  
8 (iii) the child attains the age of 16.

9 **SEC. 4. FUNDING.**

10 Amounts necessary to carry out this Act shall be  
11 taken out of the discretionary funds available to the Sec-  
12 retary of State for each of the fiscal years 2014 through  
13 2018.

14 **TITLE I—DEPARTMENT OF**  
15 **STATE ACTIONS**

16 **SEC. 101. ANNUAL REPORT.**

17 (a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than March 31 of each  
18 year, the Secretary of State shall submit to the appro-  
19 priate congressional committees an Annual Report on  
20 International Child Abduction.

21 (b) CONTENTS.—Each Annual Report shall include  
22 the following:

23 (1) A list of all countries with respect to which  
24 there were one or more abduction cases during the  
25 preceding year that identifies whether each such

1 country is a Convention country, an MOU country,  
2 or a nonparty country.

3 (2) For each country with respect to which  
4 there were 5 or more abduction cases during the  
5 preceding year:

6 (A) The number of abduction cases and  
7 the number of access cases, respectively, re-  
8 ported during the preceding year.

9 (B) The number of abduction cases and  
10 the number of access cases, respectively, that  
11 are pending as of March 1 of the year in which  
12 such Annual Report is submitted.

13 (C)(i) For Convention and MOU countries,  
14 the number of abduction cases and the number  
15 of access cases, respectively, that were pending  
16 at any point for more than 180 days after the  
17 date on which the Central Authority of the  
18 United States transmitted the complete applica-  
19 tion for each such case to the Central Authority  
20 of such country, and were not submitted by the  
21 Central Authority to the judicial or administra-  
22 tive authority, as applicable, of such country  
23 within the 180-day period.

24 (ii) The reason for the delay in submission  
25 of each case identified in clause (i) by the Cen-

1           tral Authority of such country to the judicial or  
2           administrative authority.

3           (D) The number of unresolved abduction  
4           cases, and the length of time each case has  
5           been pending.

6           (E) The number of unresolved abduction  
7           cases in which a completed application has been  
8           filed and law enforcement has failed to locate  
9           the abducted child or to enforce a return order  
10          rendered by the judicial or administrative au-  
11          thorities of such country.

12          (F) The median time required for resolu-  
13          tion of abduction cases during the preceding  
14          year, to be measured from the date on which  
15          the application with respect to the abduction  
16          case is transmitted by the Central Authority of  
17          the United States to the Central Authority of  
18          such country to the date on which the abduc-  
19          tion case is resolved.

20          (G) The percentage of the total number of  
21          abduction cases and access cases, respectively,  
22          resolved during the preceding year.

23          (H) Detailed information about each unre-  
24          solved abduction case described in subpara-  
25          graph (E) and on actions taken by the Depart-

1           ment of State to resolve such case, including  
2           the specific actions taken by the United States  
3           chief of mission in such country.

4           (I) Recommendations to improve resolution  
5           of abduction cases and access cases.

6           (3) The number of abducted children from the  
7           United States who were returned to the United  
8           States from Convention countries, MOU countries,  
9           and nonparty countries, respectively.

10          (4) A list of Convention countries and MOU  
11          countries that have failed to comply with any of  
12          their obligations under the Hague Abduction Con-  
13          vention or the MOU, as applicable, with respect to  
14          the resolution of abduction cases and access cases.

15          (5) A list of countries demonstrating a pattern  
16          of noncooperation, and a summary of the criteria on  
17          which the determination of a pattern of noncoopera-  
18          tion for each country is based.

19          (6)(A) Information on efforts by the Secretary  
20          of State to encourage other countries to become sig-  
21          natories to the Hague Abduction Convention or to  
22          enter into an MOU.

23          (B) The efforts referred to in subparagraph (A)  
24          shall include efforts to address pending abduction  
25          cases and access cases in such countries.

1           (7) A description of the efforts of the Secretary  
2       of State to encourage Convention countries and  
3       MOU countries to facilitate the work of nongovern-  
4       mental organizations within their respective coun-  
5       tries that assist left-behind parents.

6       (c) EXCEPTION.—The Annual Report shall not in-  
7       clude—

8           (1) the names of left-behind parents or children  
9       involved in abduction cases or access cases; or

10          (2) information that may identify a party in-  
11       volved in an abduction case or access case unless the  
12       party stipulates in writing to the Central Authority  
13       of the United States that such information may be  
14       included in the Annual Report.

15       (d) ADDITIONAL THEMATIC SECTIONS.—Each An-  
16       nual Report shall also include—

17          (1) information on the number of unresolved  
18       abduction cases affecting left-behind parents who  
19       are military parents and a summary of assistance of-  
20       fered to such left-behind parents;

21          (2) information on the use of airlines in abduc-  
22       tions, voluntary airline practices to prevent abduc-  
23       tions, and recommendations for best airline practices  
24       to prevent abductions;



1           (3) information on actions taken by the Central  
2       Authority of the United States to train domestic  
3       judges in application of the Hague Abduction Con-  
4       vention; and

5           (4) information on actions taken by the Central  
6       Authority of the United States to train United  
7       States Armed Forces legal assistance personnel,  
8       military chaplains, and military family support cen-  
9       ter personnel about abductions, the risk of loss of  
10      access to children, and the legal frameworks avail-  
11      able to resolve such cases.

12      (e) REPEAL OF THE HAGUE CONVENTION COMPLI-  
13      ANCE REPORT.—Section 2803 of the Foreign Affairs Re-  
14      form and Restructuring Act of 1998 (42 U.S.C. 11611)  
15      is repealed.

16      **SEC. 102. STANDARDS AND ASSISTANCE.**

17      The Secretary of State shall ensure that United  
18      States diplomatic and consular missions abroad—

19           (1) maintain a consistent reporting standard  
20      with respect to abduction cases and access cases in-  
21      volving abducted children in the country in which  
22      such mission is located for purposes of the Annual  
23      Report;

24           (2) designate at least one official in each such  
25      mission to assist left-behind parents from the United

1 States who are visiting such country to resolve cases  
2 involving an abduction or rights of access; and  
3 (3) monitor developments in cases involving ab-  
4 ducted children in the country in which such mission  
5 is located.

6 **SEC. 103. MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING.**

7 (a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of State should  
8 seek to enter into an MOU with every country that is not  
9 a Convention country and is unlikely to become a Conven-  
10 tion country in the foreseeable future, that includes—

- 11 (1) identification of the Central Authority;  
12 (2) a protocol to identify, locate, and effectuate  
13 the return of an abducted child identified in an ab-  
14 duction case not later than 6 weeks after the appli-  
15 cation with respect to the abduction case has been  
16 submitted to the judicial or administrative authority,  
17 as applicable, of the country in which the abducted  
18 child is located;  
19 (3) a protocol for the establishment and protec-  
20 tion of the rights of access;  
21 (4) identification of the judicial or administra-  
22 tive authority that will promptly adjudicate abduc-  
23 tion cases and access cases;  
24 (5) identification of a law enforcement agency  
25 and available law enforcement mechanisms and pro-

1 cedures to ensure the immediate enforcement of an  
2 order issued by the authority identified pursuant to  
3 paragraph (4) to return an abducted child to a left-  
4 behind parent, including by—

5 (A) conducting an investigation to ascer-  
6 tain the location of the abducted child;

7 (B) providing protection to the abducted  
8 child after such child is located; and

9 (C) retrieving the abducted child and mak-  
10 ing the appropriate arrangements for such child  
11 to be returned to the country of habitual resi-  
12 dence;

13 (6) a protocol to establish periodic visits be-  
14 tween a United States embassy or consular official  
15 and an abducted child to allow the official to ascer-  
16 tain the child's location and welfare; and

17 (7) such other provisions as determined to be  
18 appropriate by the Secretary of State.

19 (b) RULE OF CONSTRUCTION.—

20 (1) IN GENERAL.—Nothing in this Act shall be  
21 construed to prohibit the United States from pro-  
22 posing and entering into a memorandum of under-  
23 standing with a Convention country to further clar-  
24 ify the reciprocal obligations of the United States

1 and the Convention country under the Hague Ab-  
2 duction Convention.

3 (2) TREATMENT OF OBLIGATIONS OF CONVEN-  
4 TION COUNTRY.—In those instances in which there  
5 is a memorandum of understanding as described in  
6 paragraph (1), the obligations of the Convention  
7 country under such memorandum shall be consid-  
8 ered to be obligations of such country under the  
9 Hague Abduction Convention for purposes of this  
10 Act.

11 **SEC. 104. NOTIFICATION OF CONGRESSIONAL REPRESENT-**  
12 **ATIVES.**

13 (a) NOTIFICATION.—Except as provided in sub-  
14 section (b), the Secretary of State shall notify in writing  
15 the Member of Congress and Senators representing the  
16 legal residence of a left-behind parent when such parent  
17 reports an abduction to the Central Authority of the  
18 United States.

19 (b) EXCEPTION.—The notification requirement under  
20 subsection (a) shall not apply if the left-behind parent  
21 does not consent to the notification described in such sub-  
22 section.

23 (c) MEMBER OF CONGRESS DEFINED.—In this sec-  
24 tion, the term “Member of Congress” means a Represent-

1 active in, or Delegate or Resident Commissioner to, the  
2 Congress.

## 3 **TITLE II—PRESIDENTIAL** 4 **ACTIONS**

### 5 **SEC. 201. PRESIDENTIAL ACTIONS IN RESPONSE TO UNRE-** 6 **SOLVED CASES.**

7 (a) RESPONSE TO INTERNATIONAL CHILD ABDUC-  
8 TIONS.—

9 (1) UNITED STATES POLICY.—It shall be the  
10 policy of the United States to—

11 (A) promote the best interest of children  
12 abducted from the United States by estab-  
13 lishing legal rights and procedures for their  
14 prompt return and by promoting such rights  
15 and procedures through actions that ensure the  
16 enforcement of reciprocal international obliga-  
17 tions; and

18 (B) recognize the international character  
19 of the Hague Abduction Convention, and the  
20 need for reciprocity pursuant to and the uni-  
21 form international interpretation of the Hague  
22 Abduction Convention, by promoting the timely  
23 resolution of abduction cases through one or  
24 more of the actions described in section 205.

1           (2) REQUIREMENT OF PRESIDENTIAL AC-  
2           TION.—Whenever the President determines that the  
3           government of a foreign country has failed to resolve  
4           an unresolved abduction case, the President shall op-  
5           pose such failure through one or more of the actions  
6           described in subsection (b).

7           (b) PRESIDENTIAL ACTIONS.—

8           (1) IN GENERAL.—Subject to paragraphs (2)  
9           and (3), the President, in consultation with the Sec-  
10          retary of State, shall, as expeditiously as practicable  
11          in response to the failure described in subsection (a)  
12          by the government of a foreign country, take one or  
13          more of the actions described in paragraphs (1)  
14          through (12) of section 205(a) (or commensurate ac-  
15          tion as provided in section 205(b)) with respect to  
16          such country.

17          (2) DEADLINE FOR ACTIONS.—

18          (A) IN GENERAL.—Except as provided in  
19          subparagraph (B), not later than March 31 of  
20          each year, the President shall take one or more  
21          of the actions described in paragraphs (1)  
22          through (12) of section 205(a) (or commensu-  
23          rate action as provided in section 205(b)) with  
24          respect to each foreign country the government

1 of which has failed to resolve an unresolved ab-  
2 duction case that is pending as of such date.

3 (B) EXCEPTION.—In the case of an action  
4 under any of paragraphs (10) through (12) of  
5 section 205(a) (or commensurate action as pro-  
6 vided in section 205(b))—

7 (i) the action may only be taken after  
8 the requirements of sections 203 and 204  
9 have been satisfied; and

10 (ii) the March 31 deadline to take the  
11 action shall not apply.

12 (3) AUTHORITY FOR DELAY OF PRESIDENTIAL  
13 ACTIONS.—The President may delay action de-  
14 scribed in any of the paragraphs (10) through (12)  
15 of section 205(a) (or commensurate action as pro-  
16 vided in section 205(b)), as required under para-  
17 graph (2), if the President determines and certifies  
18 to the appropriate congressional committees that an  
19 additional, specified period of time is necessary for  
20 a continuation of negotiations that have been com-  
21 menced with the country to resolve the unresolved  
22 case.

23 (c) IMPLEMENTATION.—

24 (1) IN GENERAL.—In carrying out subsection  
25 (b), the President shall—

1           (A) take one or more actions that most ap-  
2           propriately respond to the nature and severity  
3           of the failure to resolve the unresolved abduc-  
4           tion cases; and

5           (B) seek to the fullest extent possible to  
6           target action as narrowly as practicable with re-  
7           spect to the agencies or instrumentalities of the  
8           foreign government that are responsible for  
9           such failures, in ways that respect the separa-  
10          tion of powers and independence of the judici-  
11          ary in foreign countries.

12          (2) GUIDELINES FOR PRESIDENTIAL AC-  
13          TIONS.—In addition to the guidelines under para-  
14          graph (1), the President, in determining whether to  
15          take one or more actions under paragraphs (10)  
16          through (12) of section 205(a) (or commensurate ac-  
17          tion as provided in section 205(b)), shall seek to  
18          minimize any adverse impact on—

19               (A) the population of the country whose  
20               government is targeted by the action or actions;  
21               and

22               (B) the humanitarian activities of United  
23               States and foreign nongovernmental organiza-  
24               tions in the country.



1 **SEC. 202. PRESIDENTIAL ACTIONS IN RESPONSE TO PAT-**  
2 **TERNS OF NONCOOPERATION IN CASES OF**  
3 **INTERNATIONAL CHILD ABDUCTIONS.**

4 (a) RESPONSE TO A PATTERN OF NONCOOPERA-  
5 TION.—

6 (1) UNITED STATES POLICY.—It shall be the  
7 policy of the United States to—

8 (A) oppose institutional or other systemic  
9 failures of foreign governments to fulfill their  
10 obligations pursuant to the Hague Abduction  
11 Convention or MOU, as applicable, to resolve  
12 abduction cases and access cases; and

13 (B) promote reciprocity pursuant to and  
14 compliance with the Hague Abduction Conven-  
15 tion by Convention countries and compliance  
16 with the applicable MOU by MOU countries.

17 (2) REQUIREMENT OF PRESIDENTIAL AC-  
18 TION.—Whenever the President determines that the  
19 government of a foreign country has engaged in a  
20 pattern of noncooperation, the President shall pro-  
21 mote the resolution of the unresolved abduction  
22 cases through one or more of the actions described  
23 in subsection (c).

24 (b) DESIGNATIONS OF COUNTRIES WITH PATTERNS  
25 OF NONCOOPERATION IN CASES OF INTERNATIONAL  
26 CHILD ABDUCTION.—

1 (1) ANNUAL REVIEW.—

2 (A) IN GENERAL.—Not later than March  
3 31 of each year, the President shall review the  
4 status of abduction cases and access cases in  
5 each foreign country to determine whether the  
6 government of such country has engaged in a  
7 pattern of noncooperation during the preceding  
8 12 months or since the date of the last review  
9 of such country under this subparagraph,  
10 whichever period is longer. The President shall  
11 designate each country the government of which  
12 has engaged in a pattern of noncooperation as  
13 a Country With a Pattern of Noncooperation.

14 (B) BASIS OF REVIEW.—Each review con-  
15 ducted under subparagraph (A) shall be based  
16 upon information contained in the latest Annual  
17 Report and on any other evidence available.

18 (2) DETERMINATIONS OF RESPONSIBLE PAR-  
19 TIES.—For the government of each country des-  
20 ignated as a Country With a Pattern of Noncoopera-  
21 tion under paragraph (1)(A), the President shall  
22 seek to determine the agencies or instrumentalities  
23 of such government that are responsible for the pat-  
24 tern of noncooperation by such government in order

1 to appropriately target actions under this section in  
2 response.

3 (3) CONGRESSIONAL NOTIFICATION.—Whenever  
4 the President designates a country as a Country  
5 With a Pattern of Noncooperation under paragraph  
6 (1)(A), the President shall, as soon as practicable  
7 after such designation is made, transmit to the ap-  
8 propriate congressional committees—

9 (A) the designation of the country, signed  
10 by the President; and

11 (B) the identification, if any, of responsible  
12 agencies or instrumentalities determined under  
13 paragraph (2).

14 (c) PRESIDENTIAL ACTIONS WITH RESPECT TO A  
15 COUNTRY WITH A PATTERN OF NONCOOPERATION.—

16 (1) IN GENERAL.—Subject to paragraphs (2)  
17 and (3) with respect to each Country With a Pattern  
18 of Noncooperation designated under subsection  
19 (b)(1)(A), the President shall, after the require-  
20 ments of sections 203 and 204 have been satisfied,  
21 but not later than 90 days (or 180 days in case of  
22 a delay under paragraph (2)) after the date of such  
23 designation of the country under such subsection,  
24 take one or more of the actions under paragraphs

1 (10) through (12) of section 205(a) (or commensu-  
2 rate action as provided in section 205(b)).

3 (2) AUTHORITY FOR DELAY OF PRESIDENTIAL  
4 ACTIONS.—If, on or before the date that the Presi-  
5 dent is required to take action under paragraph (1),  
6 the President determines and certifies to the appro-  
7 priate congressional committees that a single, addi-  
8 tional period of time not to exceed 90 days is nec-  
9 essary—

10 (A) for a continuation of negotiations that  
11 have been commenced with the government of a  
12 country described in such paragraph to bring  
13 about a cessation of the pattern of noncoopera-  
14 tion by such country, or

15 (B) for a review of corrective action taken  
16 by such country after designation of such coun-  
17 try as a Country With a Pattern of Non-  
18 cooperation under subsection (b)(1)(A) or in  
19 anticipation that corrective action will be taken  
20 by such country during such 90-day period,  
21 the President shall not be required to take such ac-  
22 tion until the expiration of such period of time.

23 (3) EXCEPTION FOR ONGOING PRESIDENTIAL  
24 ACTION.—

1 (A) IN GENERAL.—The President shall not  
2 be required to take action under paragraph (1)  
3 with respect to a Country With a Pattern of  
4 Noncooperation if—

5 (i) the President has taken action  
6 pursuant to paragraph (1) with respect to  
7 such country in a preceding year, such ac-  
8 tion is in effect at the time such country  
9 is designated as a Country with a Pattern  
10 of Noncooperation under subsection  
11 (b)(1)(A), and the President submits to  
12 the appropriate congressional committees  
13 the information described in section 204  
14 regarding the actions in effect with respect  
15 to such country; or

16 (ii) subject to subparagraph (B), the  
17 President determines that such country is  
18 subject to multiple, broad-based sanctions  
19 imposed in significant part in response to  
20 human rights abuses and that such sanc-  
21 tions also satisfy the requirements of this  
22 subsection.

23 (B) ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS.—If the  
24 President makes a determination under sub-  
25 paragraph (A)(ii)—

1 (i) the report under section 204 and,  
2 as applicable, the publication in the Fed-  
3 eral Register under section 208, shall  
4 specify the specific sanction or sanctions  
5 that the President has determined satisfy  
6 the requirements of this subsection; and

7 (ii) such sanctions shall remain in ef-  
8 fect subject to section 209.

9 (d) **RULE OF CONSTRUCTION.**—A determination  
10 under this section that a foreign country has engaged in  
11 a pattern of noncooperation shall not be construed to re-  
12 quire the termination of assistance or other activities with  
13 respect to such country under any other provision of law,  
14 including section 116 or 502B of the Foreign Assistance  
15 Act of 1961 (22 U.S.C. 2151(n) or 2304).

16 **SEC. 203. CONSULTATIONS WITH FOREIGN GOVERNMENTS.**

17 As soon as practicable after the President makes a  
18 determination under section 201 in response to failures  
19 to resolve unresolved abduction cases and the President  
20 decides to take action under paragraphs (10) through (12)  
21 of section 205(a) (or commensurate action as provided in  
22 section 205(b)) with respect to that country, or not later  
23 than 90 days after the President designates a country as  
24 a country with a pattern of noncooperation pursuant to  
25 section 202(b)(1)(a), the President shall—

- 1           (1) request consultation with the government of  
2       such country regarding the failures giving rise to  
3       designation of that country as a Country With a  
4       Pattern of Noncooperation regarding the pattern of  
5       noncooperation or to action under section 201; and  
6           (2) if agreed to, enter into such consultations  
7       with such country, privately or publicly.

8 **SEC. 204. REPORT TO CONGRESS.**

9       (a) IN GENERAL.—Subject to subsection (b), not  
10   later than 90 days after the President makes a determina-  
11   tion under section 201 in response to failures to resolve  
12   unresolved abduction cases and the President decides to  
13   take action under paragraphs (10) through (12) of section  
14   205(a) (or commensurate action as provided in section  
15   205(b)) with respect to that country, or not later than  
16   90 days after the President designates a country as a  
17   Country With a Pattern of Noncooperation pursuant to  
18   section 202(b)(1)(A), the President shall transmit to the  
19   appropriate congressional committees a report on the fol-  
20   lowing:

21           (1) IDENTIFICATION OF PRESIDENTIAL AC-  
22       TIONS.—An identification of the action or actions  
23       described in section 205(a) (or commensurate action  
24       as provided in section 205(b)) to be taken with re-  
25       spect to such country.

1           (2) DESCRIPTION OF VIOLATIONS.—A descrip-  
2           tion of the failure to resolve an unresolved case or  
3           the pattern of noncooperation, as applicable, giving  
4           rise to the action or actions to be taken by the  
5           President.

6           (3) PURPOSE OF PRESIDENTIAL ACTIONS.—A  
7           description of the purpose of the action or actions.

8           (4) EVALUATION.—

9           (A) DESCRIPTION.—An evaluation, in con-  
10          sultation with the Secretary of State, the par-  
11          ties described in section 203(b), and other par-  
12          ties the President determines appropriate, of  
13          the anticipated impact of the Presidential ac-  
14          tion upon—

15               (i) pending abduction cases in such  
16               country;

17               (ii) the government of such country;

18               (iii) the population of such country;

19               (iv) the United States economy;

20               (v) other interested parties; and

21               (vi) if such country is a Convention  
22          country or an MOU country, the reciprocal  
23          fulfillment of obligations pursuant to such  
24          Convention or applicable MOU, as applica-  
25          ble.



1 (B) FORM.—The evaluation under sub-  
2 paragraph (A) shall be transmitted in unclassi-  
3 fied form, but may contain a classified annex if  
4 necessary.

5 (5) STATEMENT OF POLICY OPTIONS.—A state-  
6 ment that noneconomic policy options designed to  
7 resolve the unresolved case or bring about the ces-  
8 sation of the pattern of noncooperation have reason-  
9 ably been exhausted, including the consultations re-  
10 quired in section 203.

11 (b) DELAY IN TRANSMITTAL OF REPORT.—If, on or  
12 before the date that the President is required to submit  
13 a report under subsection (a) to the appropriate congres-  
14 sional committees, the President determines and certifies  
15 to such committees that a single, additional period of time  
16 not to exceed 90 days is necessary pursuant to section  
17 202(c)(2), the President shall not be required to submit  
18 the report to such committees until the expiration of such  
19 period of time.

20 **SEC. 205. PRESIDENTIAL ACTIONS.**

21 (a) DESCRIPTION OF PRESIDENTIAL ACTIONS.—Ex-  
22 cept as provided in subsection (c), the Presidential actions  
23 referred to in this subsection are the following:

- 24 (1) A private demarche.  
25 (2) An official public demarche.

- 1 (3) A public condemnation.
- 2 (4) A public condemnation within one or more
- 3 multilateral fora.
- 4 (5) The delay or cancellation of one or more
- 5 scientific exchanges.
- 6 (6) The delay or cancellation of one or more
- 7 cultural exchanges.
- 8 (7) The denial of one or more working, official,
- 9 or state visits.
- 10 (8) The delay or cancellation of one or more
- 11 working, official, or state visits.
- 12 (9) A formal request to the foreign country con-
- 13 cerned to extradite an individual who is engaged in
- 14 abduction and who has been formally accused of,
- 15 charged with, or convicted of an extraditable offense.
- 16 (10) The withdrawal, limitation, or suspension
- 17 of United States development assistance in accord-
- 18 ance with section 116 of the Foreign Assistance Act
- 19 of 1961 (22 U.S.C. 2151n).
- 20 (11) The withdrawal, limitation, or suspension
- 21 of United States security assistance in accordance
- 22 with section 502B of the Foreign Assistance Act of
- 23 1961 (22 U.S.C. 2304).
- 24 (12) Ordering the heads of the appropriate
- 25 United States agencies not to issue any (or a speci-

1       fied number of) specific licenses, and not to grant  
2       any other specific authority (or a specified number  
3       of authorities), to export any goods or technology to  
4       such government or to the agency or instrumentality  
5       of such government determined by the President to  
6       be responsible for such unresolved case or pattern of  
7       noncooperation, as applicable, under—

8               (A) the Export Administration Act of 1979  
9               (as continued in effect under the International  
10              Emergency Economic Powers Act);

11              (B) the Arms Export Control Act;

12              (C) the Atomic Energy Act of 1954; or

13              (D) any other statute that requires the  
14              prior review and approval of the United States  
15              Government as a condition for the export or re-  
16              export of goods or services.

17       (b) COMMENSURATE ACTION.—Except as provided in  
18       subsection (c), the President may substitute any other ac-  
19       tion authorized by law for any action described in sub-  
20       section (a) if such action is commensurate in effect to the  
21       action substituted and if such action would further the  
22       purposes of this Act as specified in section 2(c). The Presi-  
23       dent shall seek to take all appropriate and feasible actions  
24       authorized by law to resolve the unresolved case or to ob-  
25       tain the cessation of such pattern of noncooperation, as

1 applicable. If commensurate action is taken under this  
2 subsection, the President shall transmit to the appropriate  
3 congressional committees a report on such action, together  
4 with an explanation for taking such action.

5 (c) EXCEPTIONS.—

6 (1) HUMANITARIAN EXCEPTION.—Any action  
7 taken pursuant to subsection (a) or (b) may not pro-  
8 hibit or restrict the provision of medicine, medical  
9 equipment or supplies, food, or other life-saving hu-  
10 manitarian assistance.

11 (2) DEFENSE AND NATIONAL SECURITY EXCEP-  
12 TION.—The President shall not be required to apply  
13 or maintain any action under section 205—

14 (A) in the case of procurement of defense  
15 articles or defense services—

16 (i) under existing contracts or sub-  
17 contracts, including the exercise of options  
18 for production quantities, to satisfy re-  
19 quirements essential to the national secu-  
20 rity of the United States;

21 (ii) if the President determines in  
22 writing and transmits to the appropriate  
23 congressional committees a report that the  
24 government or the agency or instrumen-  
25 tality of such government to which such

1 action would otherwise be applied is a sole  
2 source supplier of such defense articles or  
3 services, that such defense articles or serv-  
4 ices are essential, and that alternative  
5 sources are not readily or reasonably avail-  
6 able; or

7 (iii) if the President determines in  
8 writing and transmits to the appropriate  
9 congressional committees a report that  
10 such defense articles or services are essen-  
11 tial to the national security of the United  
12 States under defense co-production agree-  
13 ments; or

14 (B) to products or services provided under  
15 contracts entered into before the date on which  
16 the President publishes in the Federal Register  
17 notice of such action in accordance with section  
18 208.

19 **SEC. 206. PRESIDENTIAL WAIVER.**

20 (a) IN GENERAL.—Subject to subsection (b), the  
21 President may waive the application of any of the actions  
22 described in paragraphs (10) through (12) of section  
23 205(a) (or commensurate action as provided in section  
24 205(b)) with respect to a country, if the President deter-

1 mines and so reports to the appropriate congressional  
2 committees that—

3 (1) the government of such country has satis-  
4 factorily resolved any abduction case giving rise to  
5 the application of any of such actions and—

6 (A) if such country is a Convention coun-  
7 try, such country has taken measures to ensure  
8 future compliance with the provisions of the  
9 Hague Abduction Convention;

10 (B) if such country is an MOU country,  
11 such country has taken measures to ensure fu-  
12 ture compliance with the provisions of the MOU  
13 at issue; or

14 (C) if such country was a nonparty country  
15 at the time the abductions or denials of rights  
16 of access resulting in the abduction cases or ac-  
17 cess cases occurred, such country has become a  
18 Convention country or an MOU country;

19 (2) the exercise of such waiver authority would  
20 further the purposes of this Act; or

21 (3) the important national interest of the  
22 United States requires the exercise of such waiver  
23 authority.

24 (b) CONGRESSIONAL NOTIFICATION.—Not later than  
25 the date of the exercise of a waiver under subsection (a),

1 the President shall notify the appropriate congressional  
2 committees of such waiver or the intention to exercise such  
3 waiver, together with a detailed justification thereof.

4 **SEC. 207. PUBLICATION IN FEDERAL REGISTER.**

5 (a) IN GENERAL.—Subject to subsection (b), the  
6 President shall ensure publication in the Federal Register  
7 of the following:

8 (1) DETERMINATIONS OF GOVERNMENTS,  
9 AGENCIES, INSTRUMENTALITIES OF COUNTRIES  
10 WITH PATTERNS OF NONCOOPERATION.—Any des-  
11 ignation of a country that the President has des-  
12 ignated as a Country With a Pattern of Noncoopera-  
13 tion under section 202(b)(1)(A), together with, when  
14 applicable and to the extent practicable, the identi-  
15 ties of agencies or instrumentalities determined to be  
16 responsible for such pattern of noncooperation.

17 (2) PRESIDENTIAL ACTIONS.—A description of  
18 any action under paragraphs (10) through (12) of  
19 section 205(a) (or commensurate action as provided  
20 in section 205(b)) and the effective date of such ac-  
21 tion.

22 (3) DELAYS IN TRANSMITTAL OF PRESI-  
23 DENTIAL ACTION REPORTS.—Any delay in trans-  
24 mittal of a report required under section 204.

1           (4) WAIVERS.—Any waiver issued under section  
2       206.

3           (b) LIMITED DISCLOSURE OF INFORMATION.—The  
4       President may limit publication of information under this  
5       section in the same manner and to the same extent as  
6       the President may limit the publication of findings and  
7       determinations described in section 654(e) of the Foreign  
8       Assistance Act of 1961 (22 U.S.C. 2414(e)), if the Presi-  
9       dent determines that the publication of such informa-  
10      tion—

11           (1) would be harmful to the national security of  
12      the United States; or

13           (2) would not further the purposes of this Act.

14       **SEC. 208. TERMINATION OF PRESIDENTIAL ACTIONS.**

15       Any action taken under this Act or any amendment  
16       made by this Act with respect to a foreign country shall  
17       terminate on the earlier of the following two dates:

18           (1) Not later than two years after the effective  
19      date of such action unless expressly reauthorized by  
20      law.

21           (2) The date on which the President transmits  
22      to Congress a certification containing a determina-  
23      tion of the President that the government of such  
24      country has resolved any unresolved abduction case  
25      or has taken substantial and verifiable steps to cor-



- 1 rect the pattern of noncooperation at issue, as appli-
- 2 cable, that gave rise to such action.



Chairman ROYCE. Without objection, the bill is considered read and open for amendment at any point. And after recognizing myself and the ranking member for brief remarks, I will recognize the author, Mr. Smith, to explain the bill, and then any other members who seek recognition. Without objection, all members have 5 legislative days to submit statements for the record on any of today's business. And I now recognize myself to speak on the bill.

Every year, more than 1,000 American families are confronted with the nightmare of their child being abducted to a foreign country by one parent in violation of legal custody and access rights, so they are out of reach of the United States. They are out of reach of our courts and law enforcement. And this unilateral and illegal severing of the tie between the child and the left-behind American mother or American father is a tragedy. It is one that needs to be addressed. Many of us have constituents facing these wrenching separations.

More than 30 years ago, The Hague Convention on the civil aspects of child abduction was created to provide a simplified consensus mechanism for returning children to their countries of habitual residence so that parental rights are determined by applicable laws rather than by acts of kidnapping.

Today, the United States has agreements with 75 Hague partner countries which have helped to return many children safely home. But unfortunately, agreeing to the Hague Convention and complying with the Hague Convention are not the same thing and countries often do not take their obligations to their commitment there with The Hague seriously enough.

I am going to let Mr. Smith describe the contents of his bill, but I want to thank him for the groundbreaking work he has done over the past 4 years in highlighting the unaddressed problems of Hague noncompliance and working to craft a responsible legislative approach. This bill will strengthen the incentives and the tools that the Department of State has to address unresolved abduction cases. Its enhanced annual reporting will also provide American parents and our judges with a clearer picture of actual Hague compliance and the risks of non-return associated with travel to certain countries.

I want to thank Mr. Smith, thank the bipartisan committee cosponsors—Mr. Meadows worked on this, Mr. Kennedy, Mr. Holding, Mr. Sherman, Mr. Vargas—for working so cooperatively with the ranking member and with me in the process.

I now recognize the ranking member, Mr. Eliot Engel from New York, for his opening remarks.

Mr. ENGEL. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. I agree with everything you just said about the bill. And I would like to thank you for scheduling today's markup on H.R. 3212, the Sean and David Goldman International Child Abduction Prevention and Return Act.

There are few crimes more heart wrenching than child abduction. And as a parent, I cannot even imagine the anguish that someone goes through by having a child abducted by their partner and taken to another country. These left-behind parents have little leverage to have their children returned home. They are often at the mercy of foreign courts with different cultural conceptions of cus-

tody and arbitrary determinations for what is or is not in the child's best interest.

Unfortunately, there is an increasing number of international parental child abductions where one parent leaves the United States and either wrongfully removes or retains the child abroad. According to the State Department, there were 1,144 children abducted from a parent in the United States and taken abroad in the year 2012 alone. The most effective tool the United States has to help return abducted children is the 1980 Hague Convention on the civil aspects of international child abduction. This treaty creates a global standard and requires signatories to return abducted children to the country of the child's habitual residence for a custody hearing.

Regrettably, as you mentioned, Mr. Chairman, there are significant gaps in the Hague Treaty framework. Forty percent of abducted children are taken to non-Hague countries, leaving those parents with even fewer options and the Treaty has no enforcement mechanisms.

The purpose of the legislation before us today is to fill those gaps. H.R. 3212 encourages the State Department to enter into MOUs with these countries to help bring them in line with Hague standards and return children home. It also gives the President the power to sanction countries that demonstrate persistent failure in returning abducted children.

In addition, my legislation will help us monitor progress in achieving greater compliance worldwide with The Hague standards by requiring reports on child abduction cases and our U.S. Government efforts to encourage that compliance.

Sadly, international parental child abduction is an under reported and often overlooked crime which dramatically and traumatically impacts the lives of the children and parents involved. We need to send a message to the world that we take Hague compliance in returning abducted children back to the United States very seriously. This bill represents an important step forward in empowering the President and the State Department to enforce the Hague Convention and to bring more countries in line with its standards.

I would like to thank Mr. Smith for his tireless efforts on this important issue. I have spoken with him about this for many, many years and know the hard work that he has put into it and his heartfelt feelings about this. I want to thank other members who contributed as well. I want to single out Mr. Grayson for his positive contribution to the bill.

So Mr. Chairman, I support the measure and the amendment before us and encourage all members to vote in support of its passage. I yield back.

Chairman ROYCE. Thank you, Mr. Engel. We now go to the author of the bill of H.R. 3212, Subcommittee Chairman Chris Smith.

Mr. SMITH OF NEW JERSEY. Thank you very much and I want to thank you profoundly for bringing this legislation. At a time when the government is shut down, we are alive and well and running in the typically bipartisan way that you run this committee and you and Ranking Member Engel are to be commended. And I thank you especially for bringing this bill to the full committee for consideration.

I also want to thank all the members who have cosponsored and I especially want to thank a number of the family members who are here today and I will say a brief word about that in a moment.

We are here this morning to mark up H.R. 3212, the Sean and David Goldman International Child Abduction Prevention and Return Act of 2013. This legislation mirrors legislation that I wrote back in 2000 called the Trafficking Victims Protection Act which was designed to combat the hideous practice of human trafficking and to do so by holding countries to account. It also mirrors legislation authored by Congressman Frank Wolf, the International Religious Freedom Act of 1998, that in like manner holds countries to account for egregious behavior as it relates to human rights. And of course, here we are talking about child abduction.

As our members are aware, this bill enjoys strong bipartisan support. Almost every Member of the House and many of us do have constituents that have come forward and asked for our help, are affected by the tragedy of international parental child abduction.

Child abduction occurs when one parent takes a child from his or her home in the United States to another country or wrongfully retains a child abroad in violation of the other parent's custody rights, often with the intent of depriving the other parent of access to the child. The damage to the child in the left-behind parents is incalculable and too often lifelong. The children are at risk of serious emotional and psychological problems and many experience anxiety, eating problems, nightmares, mood swings, sleep disturbances, aggressive behavior, resentment, guilt, and fearfulness.

Parental child abduction is child abuse. These victims are American citizens who need the help of their Government in a more robust way, especially when normal legal processes are unavailable or fail. It was David Goldman's unrelenting almost 6-year effort to bring his son, Sean, home from Brazil that has helped to highlight the epidemic of international parental child abduction. David, like other equally heroic parents, was absolutely tenacious. He is here in this room and I thank him for the leadership that he has provided that has been extraordinary. But he was absolutely tenacious, but suffered setbacks and a numbing pain along the way. Right up until the very week before Sean was released all of us were wondering, will it happen or will it not?

Well, according to the U.S. Department of State between the years 2000 and 2008 and 2012, bereaved left-behind parents like David reported over 4,800 abduction cases involving more than 7,000 American children. I had the privilege of joining David in his fight to return Sean and experience firsthand the maddening obstacles encountered by left-behind parents, even in countries that have signed the Hague Convention and the civil aspects of international child abduction. Foreign courts and endless appeals to run out the clock, exploitation of the safeguards in the Convention, and prejudice against foreigners all block the way to bringing American children home. Too many families have been waiting too long for the return of their children.

I see in the audience Captain Paul Toland who has not been able to see his daughter Erica since 2004, despite the fact that he is her only living parent. So many other left-behind parents are here

today, many of whom like Captain Toland long to be reunited with their children.

In the room, too, and I didn't know he would be here, is a man, Mr. Feimster, the grandfather. His daughter's children were kidnapped. And this is a case, frankly, where the State Department and the Foreign Service officers involved did an extraordinary case and effectuated the return of his two granddaughters who were kidnapped to Tunisia. So congratulations. At times the system does work, but it is still broken in many ways.

I also see in the audience, Mr. Hermer, whose daughter is being held in the United Kingdom. Mr. Braden, I believe will be here, Mr. Elias, Mr. Burns, and as I said, Mr. Feimster.

Michael Elias, just one brief example, a combat injured, Iraqi Veteran, testified at one of my four hearings on abduction and I quote him in pertinent part: "As a father who no longer has his children to hold in his arms, I cannot deal with the sorrows, so I try my best to stay strong and keep fighting for their return. All of my hopes and dreams for their future now lie in the hands of others." He continued: "I am begging our Government to help not only my family, but hundreds of other heart-broken families as well to demand the return of American children."

Today is our chance to help. H.R. 3212 backs with penalties our demands for adherence to international obligations and makes clear to friends and foes alike that our children are our top priority. As stated in the legislation, it has several purposes. First, we want to protect children whose habitual residence in the U.S. from the harmful effects of abduction and to assist left-behind parents to have access to their abducted children in a safe and predictable manner while in abduction and case is pending.

We want to provide left-behind parents their advocates and judges the information they need to enhance the resolution of abduction cases to establish legal procedures. In addition, the purpose of the bill would be to establish measured, effective, and predictable actions to be undertaken by the President on behalf of abducted American children and to promote an international consensus that is in the interest of the children to have any issues related to their care and custody determined in the country of their habitual residence.

And finally, the bill would encourage the effective limitation of international mechanisms, particularly those established pursuant to The Hague Convention to achieve reciprocity in the resolution of abductions and to protect children from harmful effects of abduction. The Goldman Act gives the President important tools and I have listed them in my comments and I would ask members to take a look at those. But they are derived from previous laws including IRFA and the Trafficking Victims Protection Act so that there will be real clout behind our insistence that these children be brought back.

So without objection, I would ask that my full comments be made part of the record and again I thank my colleagues.

Chairman ROYCE. I thank you, Mr. Smith. I think the full statement being in the record is a good concept because we face a pending conference here. I would remind the other members if you have a statement to make you can certainly put it in the record and I

would ask if any other members wish to speak at this time on the underlying bill before we recognize Mr. Grayson, to offer an amendment.

Yes, Mr. Kennedy.

Mr. KENNEDY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I want to thank Ranking Member Engel and particularly Mr. Smith for your years of leadership on this and clearly the passion and leadership that you have shown to make this day become a reality.

I speak today in support of this bill and in particular on behalf of one of my constituents, Colin Bower, a devoted father from Newton, Massachusetts, who has tirelessly sought the return of his two abducted children from Egypt. Mr. Bower has worked to bring his children, Noor and Ramsay, home to the United States since their mother unexpectedly took them out of school in 2009, boarded a plane just hours later with tickets paid in cash, never to return. Despite a U.S. court ruling that gave full custody to Colin and a subsequent Egyptian court order granting him the right to visit his children, Colin has continually been denied the opportunity to see his boys and has not spoken to them in nearly 2 years.

I offer my comments because Colin is not alone. The legislation before us would bolster international mechanisms critical to resolving international abduction cases. It will provide left-behind parents with a framework about how to work through the government to gain information about their cases and elevate this issue publicly to draw the necessary attention to the children and families that are torn apart.

I thank Congressman Smith for all of your work, once again, and for offering this bill, and I ask my colleagues to support it.

With that, Mr. Chairman, I yield back.

Chairman ROYCE. I thank the gentleman, and we go to Ms. Ros-Lehtinen for her statement.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you so much, Mr. Chairman. I would like to thank our hero, Chris Smith, for bringing this important legislation for markup today and I will continue to battle with him on behalf of children who have been victims of transnational abduction and for the left-behind parents who feel helpless, and all too often hopeless, that their government won't use whatever tools are available to reunite them with their children. But I would also like to urge that we do not overlook one of the most difficult issues in child abduction law. In many instances, a parent will flee with their child or children internationally in order to escape domestic violence. There is no simple solution for this issue and it is indeed very complex and sensitive. Too often, current U.S. law addressing international child abduction actually facilitates domestic violence and child abuse by forcing the return of a child despite the recognized risks to the child or parent. That is why I am planning to introduce legislation in the next few weeks to amend the Federal law that would eliminate these unintended consequences. And I encourage my colleagues to join me in this effort as well as helping Mr. Smith pass this important bill. It is my hope that with these bills and further corrective measures to international child abduction laws, we will be able to resolve these issues so that the interest of the children and the left-behind parents and those who fear

domestic violence and abuse can be protected. And I will put my statement for the record, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, Mr. Smith.

Chairman ROYCE. Thank you, Ms. Ros-Lehtinen. Any other members? Mr. Poe for 10 seconds.

Mr. POE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I agree with this legislation. For a long time, one of my constituents, Marty Pate, we have been working with him. His daughter was stolen by his ex-wife and taken to Brazil when she was 6 years old without legal permission. I would like to introduce my entire statement into the record.

Chairman ROYCE. Without objection.

Mr. CHABOT. Mr. Chairman?

Chairman ROYCE. Mr. Chabot.

Mr. CHABOT. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I will be very brief. I had a constituent, Tom Sylvester, whose daughter Carina was taken to Austria. This gentleman did everything right, fought it for years and years, went all the way up to the Supreme Court of Austria and with decisions in his favor. We met with Colin Powell and with Madeleine Albright down at the State Department. He did everything right. Spent hundreds of thousands of dollars on legal fees, never got his daughter back. Your heart just goes out to these people that have to go through this horrific trauma and I want to thank Mr. Goldman for fighting and thank Congressman Chairman Smith for taking this on as well. These are just heart-breaking cases. It got so frustrating, I literally would have said let us send the Marines in to bring these kids back and so thank you for introducing this legislation. I hope it does some good. Thank you.

Chairman ROYCE. Thank you. Mr. Grayson, do you have an amendment at the desk?

Mr. GRAYSON. I do, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman ROYCE. The clerk will report the amendment.

Ms. MARTER. Amendment to H.R. 3212 offered by Mr. Grayson of Florida. In Section 101(b)(2)(g) insert——  
[The information referred to follows:]

**AMENDMENT TO H.R. 3212**  
**OFFERED BY MR. GRAYSON OF FLORIDA**

In section 101(b)(2)(G), insert “total number and the” before “percentage”.

In section 101(b), add at the end the following:

1           (8) The number of cases which were success-  
2       fully resolved without abducted children being re-  
3       turned to the United States from Convention coun-  
4       tries, MOU countries, and nonparty countries, re-  
5       spectively.

In section 104, redesignate subsection (c) as subsection (d).

In section 104, insert after subsection (b) the following:

6       (c) TIMING.—At the request of any person who is a  
7       left-behind parent, including a left-behind parent who pre-  
8       viously reported an abduction to the Central Authority of  
9       the United States before the date of the enactment of this  
10      Act, notification of a Member of Congress, in accordance  
11      with subsections (a) and (b), shall be provided as soon  
12      as is practicable.



In subsection (b) of section 201, strike “paragraphs (1) through (12)” each place it appears and insert “paragraphs (1) through (13)”.

In subsection (a) of section 205, redesignate paragraph (12) as paragraph (13).

In subsection (a) of section 205, insert after paragraph (11) the following:

- 1           (12) The withdrawal, limitation, or suspension
- 2           of assistance to the central government of a country
- 3           pursuant to chapter 4 of part II of the Foreign As-
- 4           sistance Act of 1961 (22 U.S.C. 2346 et seq.; relat-
- 5           ing to the Economic Support Fund).

In the bill, strike “paragraphs (10) through (12)” each place it appears and insert “paragraphs (10) through (13)”.



Chairman ROYCE. Without objection, the amendment is considered read and Mr. Grayson is recognized to explain his amendment.

Mr. GRAYSON. Mr. Chairman, I understand that time is short and many of you have an engagement in 3 minutes, so I will submit my statement for the record.

Chairman ROYCE. Mr. Grayson, if I could just commend you for working with the author and working with the committee and the ranking member on your amendment. I think it improves the bill.

Are there any further requests for recognition?

Mr. CONNOLLY. Mr. Chairman?

Chairman ROYCE. Yes, Mr. Connolly.

Mr. CONNOLLY. I know we are in a rush. I have no idea what the Grayson amendment is we are being asked to——

Chairman ROYCE. I am going to ask Mr. Grayson to explain his amendment at this time. It is in your packet.

Mr. Grayson, please explain the amendment.

Mr. GRAYSON. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. My amendment accomplishes three things. First, it strengthens the reporting requirements in the Annual Report on International Child Abduction. Second, it provides for congressional notification for each existing, unresolved, international child abduction case in each member's district, not merely the newly reported abductions as currently required by the un-amended bill. And third, it provides the President with discretion to withhold economic support assistance to foreign governments unwilling to assist in resolving child abduction case.

Mr. CONNOLLY. I thank the chair and I thank my colleague.

Chairman ROYCE. Any further comments or questions on the Grayson amendment or requests to speak? Hearing no further requests for recognition, the question now occurs on the amendment offered by Mr. Grayson.

All those in favor say aye.

[Chorus of Ayes.]

All those opposed, no. In the opinion of the Chair, the ayes have it and the amendment is agreed to.

Are there any other amendments? Hearing no further amendments to this measure, the question now occurs on agreeing to H.R. 3212, as amended. All those in favor, say aye.

[Chorus of Ayes.]

All those opposed, no. In the opinion of the Chair, the ayes have it and the bill, as amended, is agreed to. And without objection, this measure as amended, is agreed to. It is ordered favorably reported and will be reported as a single amendment in the nature of a substitute. And also, without objection, staff is directed to make technical and conforming changes and the Chairman is authorized to seek House consideration of 3212 under suspension of the rules.

And again, I want to thank Ranking Member Engel, Mr. Smith, and all of our committee members for their contribution to this legislation and their assistance with today's markup. The committee is adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 9:57 a.m., the committee was adjourned.]

## A P P E N D I X

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MATERIAL SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD

**FULL COMMITTEE MARKUP NOTICE**  
**COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS**  
U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
WASHINGTON, DC 20515-6128

**Edward R. Royce (R-CA), Chairman**

October 10, 2013

**TO: MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS**

You are respectfully requested to attend an OPEN meeting of the Committee on Foreign Affairs, to be held in Room 2172 of the Rayburn House Office Building (and available live on the Committee website at <http://www.ForeignAffairs.house.gov>):

**DATE:** Thursday, October 10, 2013

**TIME:** 9:30 a.m.

**MARKUP OF:** H.R. 3212, Sean and David Goldman International Child Abduction Prevention and Return Act of 2013.

**By Direction of the Chairman**

*The Committee on Foreign Affairs seeks to make its facilities accessible to persons with disabilities. If you are in need of special accommodations, please call 202/225-5021 at least four business days in advance of the event, whenever practicable. Questions with regard to special accommodations in general (including availability of Committee materials in alternative formats and assistive listening devices) may be directed to the Committee.*



**COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS**  
MINUTES OF FULL COMMITTEE MARKUP

Day Thursday Date 10/10/13 Room 2172

Starting Time 9:35 A.M. Ending Time 9:57 A.M.

Recesses 0 (\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_ ) (\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_ ) (\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_ ) (\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_ ) (\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_ ) (\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_ )

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**Presiding Member(s)**

*Rep. Edward R. Royce, Chairman*

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*Check all of the following that apply:*

Open Session ☒

Electronically Recorded (taped) ☒

Executive (closed) Session ☒

Stenographic Record ☒

Televised ☒

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**BILLS FOR MARKUP:** *(Include bill number(s) and title(s) of legislation.)*

*H.R. 3212, Sean and David Goldman International Child Abduction Prevention and Return Act of 2013*

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**COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:**

*See Attendance Sheet.*

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**NON-COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:**

*None.*

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**STATEMENTS FOR THE RECORD:** *(List any statements submitted for the record.)*

*Rep. Ros-Lehtinen*

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**ACTIONS TAKEN DURING THE MARKUP:** *(Attach copies of legislation and amendments.)*

*See Markup Summary.*

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**RECORDED VOTES TAKEN (FOR MARKUP):** *(Attach final vote tally sheet listing each member.)*

<u>Subject</u>	<u>Yeas</u>	<u>Nays</u>	<u>Present</u>	<u>Not Voting</u>
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TIME SCHEDULED TO RECONVENE \_\_\_\_\_

or

TIME ADJOURNED 9:57 a.m.

---

**Doug Anderson, General Counsel**

**HOUSE COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS**  
Full Committee Markup

<i>Present</i>	<i>Member</i>
X	Edward R. Royce, CA
X	Christopher H. Smith, NJ
X	Ileana Ros-Lehtinen, FL
	Dana Rohrabacher, CA
X	Steve Chabot, OH
	Joe Wilson, SC
	Michael T. McCaul, TX
X	Ted Poe, TX
X	Matt Salmon, AZ
X	Tom Marino, PA
	Jeff Duncan, SC
	Adam Kinzinger, IL
	Mo Brooks, AL
X	Tom Cotton, AR
X	Paul Cook, CA
X	George Holding, NC
X	Randy K. Weber, Sr., TX
X	Scott Perry, PA
	Steve Stockman, TX
	Ron DeSantis, FL
	Trey Radel, FL
X	Doug Collins, GA
X	Mark Meadows, NC
X	Ted S. Yoho, FL
	Luke Messer, IN

<i>Present</i>	<i>Member</i>
X	Eliot L. Engel, NY
	Eni F.H. Faleomavaega, AS
	Brad Sherman, CA
	Gregory W. Meeks, NY
	Albio Sires, NJ
X	Gerald E. Connolly, VA
	Theodore E. Deutch, FL
	Brian Higgins, NY
	Karen Bass, CA
	William Keating, MA
X	David Cicilline, RI
X	Alan Grayson, FL
	Juan Vargas, CA
	Bradley S. Schneider, IL
X	Joseph P. Kennedy III, MA
X	Ami Bera, CA
X	Alan S. Lowenthal, CA
X	Grace Meng, NY
	Lois Frankel, FL
X	Tulsi Gabbard, HI
	Joaquin Castro, TX

**10/10/13 Foreign Affairs Committee Markup Summary**

The Chair called up H.R. 3212 for consideration.

H.R. 3212 (Smith (NJ)), “Sean and David Goldman International Child Abduction Prevention and Return Act of 2013.”

- 1) Mr. Grayson offered an amendment (Grayson 206) which was agreed to by voice vote.

H.R. 3212, as amended by Grayson 206, was agreed to by voice vote, ordered favorably reported to the House by unanimous consent.

The Committee adjourned.



**Statement for the Record**  
*Submitted by the Honorable Ileana Ros-Lehtinen*

I'd like to thank my colleague Chris Smith for bringing this important legislation forward for mark-up today: the Sean and David Goldman International Child Abduction Prevention and Return Act.

I'll continue to fight on behalf of children who have been the victims of transnational abduction and for the left-behind parents who feel helpless and all too often hopeless that their government won't use whatever tools available to reunite them with their children.

But I would also like to urge that we do not overlook one of the most difficult issues in child abduction law:

In many instances, a parent will flee with the child or children internationally in order to escape domestic violence.

There is no simple solution for this issue, and it is indeed very complex and sensitive.

Too often, current U.S. law addressing international child abduction actually facilitates domestic violence and child abuse by forcing the return of a child despite a recognized risk to the child or parent.

That is why I am planning to introduce legislation in the next few weeks to amend federal law that would eliminate these unintended consequences.

I encourage my colleagues to join me in this effort as well as Mr. Smith's bill here today.

According to the State Department, there are hundreds of parental transnational child abduction cases each year, and in most cases the parent in the United States faces an uphill, often impossible battle with the foreign country to return their child.

The effects on both the children and the parents are significant and can have lifelong consequences.

Mr. Smith's bill represents a new approach to resolving this issue, and gives the United States government and the President the avenues needed to press those countries that are in a pattern of non-cooperation in working with the U.S. to resolve these abduction cases.

If words aren't enough, and doing the right thing isn't motivation enough for some of these countries who refuse to return these abducted children, then they must be convinced by actions that send the message that the United States will not rest until we bring every wrongfully abducted American child home.

Too many parents have been separated from their children for too long with little to no recourse, and it is time to change that.

It is my hope that with this bill, and the further corrective measures to international child abduction law I plan to introduce soon, we will be able to resolve these issues so that the interests of the children, the left-behind parents, and those who fear domestic violence and abuse can be protected.

Thank you.