

115TH CONGRESS  
2D SESSION

# H. R. 4932

To address the disparate impact of climate change on women and support the efforts of women globally to address climate change, and for other purposes.

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## IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

FEBRUARY 5, 2018

Ms. LEE (for herself, Mr. TAKANO, Mr. ELLISON, Ms. BARRAGÁN, Ms. WILSON of Florida, Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ, Ms. CLARK of Massachusetts, Ms. VELÁZQUEZ, Mr. KIHUEN, Ms. SCHAKOWSKY, Mr. MCGOVERN, Mr. HASTINGS, Ms. NORTON, Mr. KHANNA, Mr. PAYNE, Mrs. WATSON COLEMAN, Mr. CLEAVER, Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia, Ms. ROYBAL-ALLARD, and Ms. MCCOLLUM) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Affairs, and in addition to the Committee on Energy and Commerce, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned

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## A BILL

To address the disparate impact of climate change on women and support the efforts of women globally to address climate change, 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; TABLE OF CONTENTS.**

4 (a) SHORT TITLE.—This Act may be cited as the  
5 “Women and Climate Change Act of 2018”.

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

- Sec. 1. Short title; table of contents.
- Sec. 2. Findings.
- Sec. 3. Definitions.
- Sec. 4. Statement of policy.

TITLE I—STRATEGIES, POLICIES, AND PROGRAMS

- Sec. 101. Federal Interagency Working Group on Women and Climate Change.
- Sec. 102. Development and implementation of strategy and policies to prevent and respond to the effects of climate change on women globally.

TITLE II—OVERSIGHT AND ACCOUNTABILITY

- Sec. 201. Senior coordinator for women and climate change.
- Sec. 202. Briefing and report.

3 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

4 Congress finds the following:

5 (1) Women in the United States and around  
 6 the world are the linchpin of families and commu-  
 7 nities and are often the first to feel the immediate  
 8 and adverse effects of social, environmental, and eco-  
 9 nomic stresses on their families and communities.

10 (2) The United Nations has recognized, as one  
 11 of the central organizing principles for its work, that  
 12 “no enduring solution to society’s most threatening  
 13 social, economic and political problems can be found  
 14 without the full participation, and the full empower-  
 15 ment, of the world’s women”.

16 (3) The United Nations Development Pro-  
 17 gramme 2013 Human Development Report has  
 18 found that the number of people living in extreme

1 poverty could increase by up to 3,000,000,000 by  
2 2050 unless environmental disasters are averted by  
3 coordinated global action.

4 (4) Climate change is already forcing vulnerable  
5 communities in developing countries to face unprece-  
6 dented climate stress, including water scarcity and  
7 drought, as well as severe weather events and floods,  
8 which can lead to reduced agricultural productivity,  
9 food insecurity, and increased disease.

10 (5) Climate change exacerbates issues of scar-  
11 city and lack of accessibility to primary natural re-  
12 sources, forest resources, and arable land for food  
13 production, thereby contributing to increased conflict  
14 and instability, as well as the workload and stresses  
15 on women farmers, who are estimated to produce 60  
16 to 80 percent of the food in most developing coun-  
17 tries.

18 (6) Women will disproportionately face harmful  
19 impacts from climate change, particularly in poor  
20 and developing nations where women regularly as-  
21 sume increased responsibility for growing the fam-  
22 ily's food and collecting water, fuel, and other re-  
23 sources.

24 (7) Epidemics, such as malaria and zika, are  
25 expected to worsen and spread due to variations in

1 climate, putting women (especially pregnant mothers  
2 and women who hope to become pregnant) and chil-  
3 dren without access to prevention and medical serv-  
4 ices at risk.

5 (8) The direct and indirect effects of climate  
6 change have a disproportionate impact on  
7 marginalized women such as refugee and displaced  
8 persons, religious or ethnic minorities, adolescent  
9 girls, and women and girls with disabilities and  
10 those who are living with HIV.

11 (9) Conflict has a disproportionate impact on  
12 the most vulnerable populations including women,  
13 and is fueled in the world's poorest regions by  
14 harsher climate, leading to migration, refugee crises,  
15 and conflicts over scarce natural resources including  
16 land and water.

17 (10) Displaced, refugee, and stateless women  
18 and girls face extreme violence and threats, includ-  
19 ing—

20 (A) being forced to exchange sex for food  
21 and humanitarian supplies;

22 (B) being at increased risk of rape, sexual  
23 exploitation and abuse; and

1 (C) being at increased risk for HIV, STIs,  
2 unplanned pregnancy, and poor reproductive  
3 health.

4 (11) It is predicted that climate change will  
5 lead to increasing frequency and intensity of extreme  
6 weather conditions, precipitating the occurrence of  
7 natural disasters around the globe.

8 (12) The relocation and death of women, and  
9 especially mothers, as a result of climate-related dis-  
10 asters often has devastating impacts on social sup-  
11 port networks, family ties, and the coping capacity  
12 of families and communities.

13 (13) The ability of women to adapt to climate  
14 change is constrained by a lack of economic free-  
15 doms, property and inheritance rights, as well as ac-  
16 cess to financial resources, education, family plan-  
17 ning and reproductive health, and new tools, equip-  
18 ment, and technology.

19 (14) Despite a unique capacity and knowledge  
20 to promote and provide for adaptation to climate  
21 change, women often have insufficient resources to  
22 undertake such adaptation.

23 (15) Women are shown to have a multiplier ef-  
24 fect by using their income and resources, when given  
25 the necessary tools, to increase the well-being of

1 their children and families, and thus play a critical  
2 role in reducing food insecurity, poverty, and socio-  
3 economic effects of climate change.

4 (16) Women are often underrepresented in the  
5 development and formulation of policy regarding  
6 mitigation and adaptation to climate change, even  
7 though they are often in the best position to provide  
8 and consult on adaptive strategies.

9 **SEC. 3. DEFINITIONS.**

10 In this Act:

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

14 (A) the Committee on Foreign Affairs and  
15 the Committee on Appropriations of the House  
16 of Representatives; and

17 (B) the Committee on Foreign Relations  
18 and the Committee on Appropriations of the  
19 Senate.

20 (2) CLIMATE CHANGE.—The term “climate  
21 change” means a change of climate that is attrib-  
22 uted directly or indirectly to human activity and al-  
23 tering the composition of the global atmosphere.

24 (3) DEVELOPING COUNTRY.—The term “devel-  
25 oping country” means those countries classified by

1 the World Bank as having a low-income or lower-  
2 middle-income economy.

3 (4) DISPARATE IMPACT.—The term “disparate  
4 impact” refers to the historic and ongoing impacts  
5 of the pattern and practice of discrimination in em-  
6 ployment, education, housing, banking, health, and  
7 nearly every other aspect of life in the economy, so-  
8 ciety, or culture that have an adverse impact on mi-  
9 norities, women, or other protected groups, regard-  
10 less of whether such practices were motivated by dis-  
11 criminatory intent.

12 (5) ENVIRONMENTAL DISASTERS.—The term  
13 “environmental disasters” means specific events  
14 caused by human activity that result in seriously  
15 negative effects on the environment.

16 (6) ENVIRONMENTAL REFUGEES.—The term  
17 “environmental refugees” means people displaced be-  
18 cause of environmental causes, notably land loss and  
19 degradation, and natural disasters, who have left  
20 their community or country of origin.

21 (7) EXTREME POVERTY.—The term “extreme  
22 poverty” means having an income level or living  
23 standard at a level of extreme deprivation based on  
24 living with income below 50 percent of the poverty  
25 line as established by the individual country at issue,

1 or below \$1.90 per day as determined by the World  
2 Bank.

3 (8) EXTREME WEATHER.—The term “extreme  
4 weather” means unexpected, unusual, unpredictable,  
5 severe, or unseasonal weather that is at the extremes  
6 of the historical distribution range that has been  
7 seen in the past.

8 (9) FEDERAL AGENCY.—The term “Federal  
9 agency” means any executive department, Govern-  
10 ment corporation, Government-controlled corpora-  
11 tion, or other establishment in the executive branch  
12 of the Government (including the Executive Office of  
13 the President), or any independent regulatory agen-  
14 cy.

15 (10) FOOD INSECURITY.—The term “food inse-  
16 curity” means a lack of consistent access to food.

17 (11) MOST VULNERABLE COMMUNITIES AND  
18 POPULATIONS.—The term “most vulnerable commu-  
19 nities and populations” means communities and pop-  
20 ulations, including women, impoverished commu-  
21 nities, children, people with disabilities, and indige-  
22 nous peoples, who are at risk of substantial adverse  
23 impacts of climate change and have limited capacity  
24 to respond to such impacts.

1           (12) POVERTY.—The term “poverty” means an  
2           income level and living standard insufficient to meet  
3           basic needs.

4 **SEC. 4. STATEMENT OF POLICY.**

5           It is the policy of the United States, in partnership  
6 with affected countries, donor country governments, inter-  
7 national financial institutions, international nongovern-  
8 mental organizations, and civil society groups, especially  
9 those led by women, to combat the leading causes of cli-  
10 mate change, mitigate the effects of climate change on  
11 women and girls, and elevate the participation of women  
12 in policy, program, and community decision-making proc-  
13 esses with respect to climate change, by—

14           (1) establishing the Federal Interagency Work-  
15           ing Group on Women and Climate Change, mission  
16           of which is to prevent and respond to the effects of  
17           climate change on women globally; and

18           (2) implementing a coordinated, integrated, evi-  
19           dence-based, and comprehensive strategy on Women  
20           and Climate Change throughout United States poli-  
21           cies in the future.

1 **TITLE I—STRATEGIES, POLICIES,**  
2 **AND PROGRAMS**

3 **SEC. 101. FEDERAL INTERAGENCY WORKING GROUP ON**  
4 **WOMEN AND CLIMATE CHANGE.**

5 (a) ESTABLISHMENT.—There is established in the  
6 Department of State a Federal Interagency Working  
7 Group on Women and Climate Change, which shall be  
8 chaired by the Senior Coordinator for Women and Climate  
9 Change designated pursuant to section 201. Members of  
10 the Working Group shall be selected by their respective  
11 agency heads from the senior ranks of such agencies. The  
12 Working Group shall—

13 (1) be composed of a senior representative from  
14 each of—

15 (A) the Department of State, including—

16 (i) the Office of Global Women’s  
17 Issues;

18 (ii) the Office of Civil Rights;

19 (iii) the Bureau of Oceans and Inter-  
20 national Environmental and Scientific Af-  
21 fairs;

22 (iv) the Bureau of Population, Refu-  
23 gees, and Migration;

24 (v) the Bureau of Democracy, Human  
25 Rights, and Labor; and

1 (vi) the Bureau of International Orga-  
2 nization Affairs;

3 (B) the Agency for International Develop-  
4 ment;

5 (C) the Centers for Disease Control and  
6 Prevention;

7 (D) the Environmental Protection Agency;

8 (E) the National Oceanic and Atmospheric  
9 Administration;

10 (F) the National Institutes of Health;

11 (G) the National Science Foundation;

12 (H) the White House Council on Environ-  
13 mental Quality; and

14 (I) other members as designated by the  
15 Senior Coordinator;

16 (2) coordinate and integrate the development of  
17 all policies and activities of the Federal Government  
18 across all agencies relating to—

19 (A) combating the effects of climate  
20 change on women in the international sphere;  
21 and

22 (B) increasing the Federal Government re-  
23 sponse and strategy to fight climate change for  
24 the security of the United States and the inter-  
25 national community;

1           (3) allow each member of the Working Group  
2           to act as a representative for the Working Group  
3           within the Federal department or agency of such  
4           member to facilitate implementation of the Working  
5           Group policies within such department or agency;

6           (4) ensure that all relevant Federal depart-  
7           ments or agencies comply with appropriate guide-  
8           lines, policies, and directives from the Working  
9           Group, the Department of State, and other Federal  
10          departments or agencies with responsibilities relating  
11          to climate change;

12          (5) ensure that Federal departments or agen-  
13          cies, State governments, and relevant congressional  
14          committees, in consultation with nongovernmental  
15          organizations and policy experts in the field and  
16          State and local government officials who administer  
17          or direct policy for programs relating to climate  
18          change and women—

19                  (A) have access to, receive, and appro-  
20                  priately disseminate best practices in the ad-  
21                  ministration of programs;

22                  (B) have adequate resources to maximize  
23                  the public awareness of such programs;

24                  (C) increase the reach of such programs;

25                  (D) share relevant data; and

1 (E) issue relevant guidance; and

2 (6) identify and disseminate best practices for  
3 improved data collection on the part of each agency  
4 and department relevant to the disparate impact of  
5 climate change on women, including in—

6 (A) unpaid care work;

7 (B) community advocacy, activism, and  
8 representation;

9 (C) women and girls' access to education;

10 (D) access to comprehensive health care,  
11 include reproductive health and rights;

12 (E) desertification and food insecurity;

13 (F) community infrastructure, multi-level  
14 Government adaptability, and climate-resilience;

15 (G) climate and weather-related crisis re-  
16 sponse including safety from gender-based vio-  
17 lence; and

18 (H) women's involvement and leadership in  
19 the development of frameworks and policies for  
20 climate resilience.

21 (b) CONSULTATION PERMITTED.—The Federal  
22 Interagency Working Group may consult and obtain rec-  
23 ommendations from such independent nongovernmental  
24 policy experts, State and local government officials, inde-  
25 pendent groups and organizations, or other groups or or-

1 ganizations as the Senior Coordinator determines will as-  
2 sist in carrying out the mission of the Office.

3 (c) FREQUENCY OF MEETING.—The Federal Inter-  
4 agency Working Group shall meet on a quarterly basis to  
5 discuss and develop policies, projects, and programs, and  
6 shall meet with the Senior Coordinator for Women and  
7 Climate Change on a monthly basis to report on and dis-  
8 cuss implementation of such policies, projects, and pro-  
9 grams.

10 **SEC. 102. DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION OF**  
11 **STRATEGY AND POLICIES TO PREVENT AND**  
12 **RESPOND TO THE EFFECTS OF CLIMATE**  
13 **CHANGE ON WOMEN GLOBALLY.**

14 (a) INITIAL STRATEGY.—Not later than 180 days  
15 after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Senior  
16 Coordinator for Women and Climate Change and the Am-  
17 bassador-at-Large for the Office of Global Women’s Issues  
18 of the Department of State, in consultation with the Fed-  
19 eral Interagency Working Group, shall develop and submit  
20 to the appropriate congressional committees a United  
21 States National and International Strategy to prevent and  
22 respond to the effects of climate change on women. The  
23 strategy shall include—

1           (1) recognizing the disparate impacts of climate  
2 change on women and the efforts of women globally  
3 to address climate change;

4           (2) taking effective action to prevent and re-  
5 spond to climate change and mitigate the effects of  
6 climate change on women around the world, as well  
7 as to promoting gender equality, economic growth,  
8 public health, racial justice, and human rights;

9           (3) implementing the United Nations Sustain-  
10 able Development goals listed in subsection (e),  
11 through and beyond 2030, as part of the strategy to  
12 prevent and respond to the effects of climate change  
13 on women globally;

14           (4) implementing balanced participation of men  
15 and women, especially individuals from the commu-  
16 nities most impacted, in climate change adaptation  
17 and mitigation efforts, including in governance and  
18 diplomatic positions within the United States Gov-  
19 ernment;

20           (5) working at the local, national, and inter-  
21 national levels, including with individuals, families,  
22 and communities, to prevent and respond to the ef-  
23 fects of climate change on women;

24           (6) systematically integrating and coordinating  
25 efforts to prevent and respond to the effects of cli-

1       mate change on women internationally into United  
2       States foreign policy and foreign assistance pro-  
3       grams;

4           (7) investing in research on climate change  
5       through appropriate Federal departments or agen-  
6       cies and funding of university and independent re-  
7       search groups on the various causes and effects of  
8       climate change;

9           (8) developing and implementing gender-sen-  
10       sitive frameworks in policies to address climate  
11       change, which account for the specific impacts of cli-  
12       mate change on women;

13          (9) developing policies to support women who  
14       are particularly vulnerable to climate change impacts  
15       to prepare for, build their resilience, and adapt to  
16       such impacts, including a commitment to increase  
17       education and training opportunities for women to  
18       develop local resilience plans to address the effects  
19       of climate change;

20          (10) developing and investing in programs for  
21       the education and empowerment of women and girls  
22       in the United States and across the global commu-  
23       nity, including to gather information on how climate  
24       change is affecting their lives and for guidance on  
25       the needs of their families and communities in the

1 face of climate change, in coordination with the dip-  
2 lomatic missions of other countries;

3 (11) consulting with representatives of civil so-  
4 ciety, including nongovernmental organizations,  
5 faith-based organizations, multilateral organizations,  
6 local and international civil society groups, and local  
7 climate change organizations and their beneficiaries  
8 with demonstrated experience in preventing and re-  
9 sponding to the effects of climate change on women;

10 (12) supporting and building local capacity in  
11 developing countries, including with respect to gov-  
12 ernments at all levels and nongovernmental organi-  
13 zations (especially women-led), to prevent and re-  
14 spond to the effects of climate change on women;

15 (13) developing programs to empower women in  
16 communities to have a voice in the planning, design,  
17 implementation, and evaluation of strategies to ad-  
18 dress climate change so that their roles and re-  
19 sources are taken into account;

20 (14) including women in economic development  
21 planning, policies, and practices that directly im-  
22 prove conditions that result from climate change;

23 (15) integrating a gender approach in all poli-  
24 cies and programs in the United States that are  
25 globally related to climate change; and

1           (16) ensuring that such policies and programs  
2           support women globally to prepare for, build resil-  
3           ience for, and adapt to climate change.

4           (b) UPDATES.—The Senior Coordinator for Women  
5           and Climate Change shall consult with the Federal Inter-  
6           agency Working Group to collect information and feed-  
7           back, to update the strategy and programs to prevent and  
8           respond to the effects of climate change on women glob-  
9           ally.

10          (c) IMPLEMENTATION PLAN.—Not later than 60  
11          days after the date of the submission of the strategy under  
12          subsection (a), the Senior Coordinator for Women and Cli-  
13          mate Change shall submit to the appropriate congressional  
14          committees an implementation plan and budget for the  
15          strategy.

16          (d) ASSISTANCE AND CONSULTATION.—The Senior  
17          Coordinator for Women and Climate Change shall assist  
18          and provide consultation to the Secretary of State in pre-  
19          venting and responding to the effects of climate change  
20          on women globally.

21          (e) UNITED NATIONS SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT  
22          GOALS THROUGH AND BEYOND 2030.—The United Na-  
23          tions Sustainable Development goals listed in this sub-  
24          section are the following:

25                 (1) Ending poverty in all its forms everywhere.

1           (2) Ending hunger, achieving food security and  
2 improved nutrition, and promoting sustainable agri-  
3 culture.

4           (3) Ensuring healthy lives and promote well-  
5 being for all and at all ages.

6           (4) Ensuring inclusive, equitable, and quality  
7 education and promoting lifelong learning opportuni-  
8 ties for all.

9           (5) Achieving gender equality and empowering  
10 all women and girls.

11           (6) Ensuring the availability and sustainable  
12 management of water and sanitation for all.

13           (7) Ensuring access to affordable, reliable, sus-  
14 tainable and modern energy for all.

15           (8) Promoting sustained, inclusive, and sustain-  
16 able economic growth, full and productive employ-  
17 ment, and decent work for all.

18           (9) Building resilient infrastructure, promoting  
19 inclusive and sustainable industrialization, and fos-  
20 tering innovation.

21           (10) Reducing inequality within and among  
22 countries.

23           (11) Making cities and human settlements in-  
24 clusive, safe, resilient, and sustainable.

1           (12) Ensuring sustainable consumption and  
2 production patterns.

3           (13) Taking urgent action to combat climate  
4 change and its impacts.

5           (14) Conserving and sustainably using the  
6 oceans, seas, and marine resources for sustainable  
7 development.

8           (15) Protecting, restoring, and promoting sus-  
9 tainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably  
10 managing forests, combating desertification, and  
11 halting and reversing land degradation and biodiver-  
12 sity loss.

13           (16) Promoting peaceful and inclusive societies  
14 for sustainable development, providing access to jus-  
15 tice for all, and building effective, accountable and  
16 inclusive institutions at all levels.

17           (17) Strengthening the means of policy imple-  
18 mentation and revitalize the global partnership for  
19 sustainable development.

20           **TITLE II—OVERSIGHT AND**  
21           **ACCOUNTABILITY**

22           **SEC. 201. SENIOR COORDINATOR FOR WOMEN AND CLI-**  
23           **MATE CHANGE.**

24           (a) ESTABLISHMENT.—The Ambassador-at-Large of  
25 the Office of Global Women’s Issues shall designate a cur-

1 rent employee serving as a Senior Advisor, or equivalent  
2 role, to serve concurrently as the Senior Coordinator for  
3 Women and Climate Change.

4 (b) IN GENERAL.—The Senior Coordinator shall—

5 (1) direct the activities, policies, programs, and  
6 funding of the Department of State relating to the  
7 effects of climate change on women, including with  
8 respect to efforts to prevent and respond to these ef-  
9 fects;

10 (2) advise the Secretary, the relevant heads of  
11 other Federal departments and independent agen-  
12 cies, and other entities within the Executive Office  
13 of the President, regarding the establishment of—

14 (A) policies, goals, objectives, and priorities  
15 for addressing and combating the effects of cli-  
16 mate change on women; and

17 (B) mechanisms to improve the effective-  
18 ness, coordination, impact, and outcomes of  
19 programs relating to addressing and combating  
20 the effects of climate change on women, in co-  
21 ordination with experts in the field, nongovern-  
22 mental organizations, and foreign governments;  
23 and

24 (3) identify and assist in the resolution of any  
25 disputes that arise between Federal agencies relating

1 to policies and programs to address and combat the  
2 effects of climate change on women or other matters  
3 within the responsibility of the Office.

4 (c) OVERSIGHT.—The Senior Coordinator for Women  
5 and Climate Change shall report to the Ambassador-at-  
6 Large for the Office of Global Women’s Issues and the  
7 Secretary of State.

8 **SEC. 202. BRIEFING AND REPORT.**

9 Not later than 180 days after the date of the enact-  
10 ment of this Act, and annually thereafter, the Amba-  
11 sador-at-Large and Senior Coordinator for Women and  
12 Climate Change shall—

13 (1) brief the appropriate congressional commit-  
14 tees on—

15 (A) the effects of climate change on  
16 women; and

17 (B) the prevention and response strategies,  
18 programming, and associated outcomes with re-  
19 spect to climate change; and

20 (2) submit to the appropriate congressional  
21 committees an assessment of human and financial  
22 resources necessary to fulfill the purposes of and  
23 carry out this Act.

○