

115TH CONGRESS  
1ST SESSION

# H. R. 601

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## AN ACT

To enhance the transparency and accelerate the impact of assistance provided under the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 to promote quality basic education in developing countries, to better enable such countries to achieve universal access to quality basic education and improved learning outcomes, to eliminate duplication and waste, 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; TABLE OF CONTENTS.**

2 (a) SHORT TITLE.—This Act may be cited as the  
3 “Reinforcing Education Accountability in Development  
4 Act” or the “READ Act”.

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

- Sec. 1. Short title; table of contents.
- Sec. 2. Definitions.
- Sec. 3. Assistance to promote sustainable, quality basic education.
- Sec. 4. Comprehensive integrated United States strategy to promote basic education.
- Sec. 5. Improving coordination and oversight.
- Sec. 6. Monitoring and evaluation of programs.
- Sec. 7. Transparency and reporting to Congress.

7 **SEC. 2. DEFINITIONS.**

8 (a) APPROPRIATE CONGRESSIONAL COMMITTEES.—  
9 In this Act, the term “appropriate congressional commit-  
10 tees” means—

- 11 (1) the Committee on Appropriations of the  
12 Senate;
- 13 (2) the Committee on Foreign Relations of the  
14 Senate;
- 15 (3) the Committee on Appropriations of the  
16 House of Representatives; and
- 17 (4) the Committee on Foreign Affairs of the  
18 House of Representatives.

19 (b) OTHER DEFINITIONS.—In this Act, the terms  
20 “basic education”, “marginalized children and vulnerable  
21 groups”, “national education plan”, “partner country”,  
22 and “relevant Executive branch agencies and officials”

1 have the meanings given such terms in section 105(c) of  
2 the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961, as added by section  
3 3.

4 **SEC. 3. ASSISTANCE TO PROMOTE SUSTAINABLE, QUALITY**  
5 **BASIC EDUCATION.**

6 Section 105 of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961  
7 (22 U.S.C. 2151c) is amended by adding at the end the  
8 following:

9 “(c) ASSISTANCE TO PROMOTE SUSTAINABLE,  
10 QUALITY BASIC EDUCATION.—

11 “(1) DEFINITIONS.—In this subsection:

12 “(A) BASIC EDUCATION.—The term ‘basic  
13 education’ includes—

14 “(i) measurable improvements in lit-  
15 eracy, numeracy, and other basic skills de-  
16 velopment that prepare an individual to be  
17 an active, productive member of society  
18 and the workforce;

19 “(ii) workforce development, voca-  
20 tional training, and digital literacy in-  
21 formed by real market needs and opportu-  
22 nities and that results in measurable im-  
23 provements in employment;

24 “(iii) programs and activities designed  
25 to demonstrably improve—

1                   “(I) early childhood, preprimary  
2                   education, primary education, and  
3                   secondary education, which can be de-  
4                   livered in formal or nonformal edu-  
5                   cation settings; and

6                   “(II) learning for out-of-school  
7                   youth and adults; and

8                   “(iv) capacity building for teachers,  
9                   administrators, counselors, and youth  
10                  workers that results in measurable im-  
11                  provements in student literacy, numeracy,  
12                  or employment.

13                  “(B) COMMUNITIES OF LEARNING.—The  
14                  term ‘communities of learning’ means a holistic  
15                  approach to education and community engage-  
16                  ment in which schools act as the primary re-  
17                  source center for delivery of a service to the  
18                  community at large, leveraging and maximizing  
19                  the impact of other development efforts and re-  
20                  ducing duplication and waste.

21                  “(C) GENDER PARITY IN BASIC EDU-  
22                  CATION.—The term ‘gender parity in basic edu-  
23                  cation’ means that girls and boys have equal ac-  
24                  cess to quality basic education.

1           “(D) MARGINALIZED CHILDREN AND VUL-  
2           NERABLE GROUPS.—The term ‘marginalized  
3           children and vulnerable groups’ includes girls,  
4           children affected by or emerging from armed  
5           conflict or humanitarian crises, children with  
6           disabilities, children in remote or rural areas  
7           (including those who lack access to safe water  
8           and sanitation), religious or ethnic minorities,  
9           indigenous peoples, orphans and children af-  
10          fected by HIV/AIDS, child laborers, married  
11          adolescents, and victims of trafficking.

12          “(E) NATIONAL EDUCATION PLAN.—The  
13          term ‘national education plan’ means a com-  
14          prehensive national education plan developed by  
15          partner country governments in consultation  
16          with other stakeholders as a means for wide-  
17          scale improvement of the country’s education  
18          system, including explicit, credible strategies in-  
19          formed by effective practices and standards to  
20          achieve quality universal basic education.

21          “(F) NONFORMAL EDUCATION.—The term  
22          ‘nonformal education’ means organized edu-  
23          cational activities outside the established formal  
24          system, whether operating separately or as an  
25          important feature of a broader activity, that are

1 intended to provide students with measurable  
2 improvements in literacy, numeracy, and other  
3 basic skills development that prepare an indi-  
4 vidual to be an active, productive member of so-  
5 ciety and the workforce.

6 “(G) PARTNER COUNTRY.—The term  
7 ‘partner country’ means a developing country  
8 that participates in or benefits from basic edu-  
9 cation programs under this subsection pursuant  
10 to the prioritization criteria described in para-  
11 graph (4), including level of need, opportunity  
12 for impact, and the availability of resources.

13 “(H) RELEVANT EXECUTIVE BRANCH  
14 AGENCIES AND OFFICIALS.—The term ‘relevant  
15 Executive branch agencies and officials’ means  
16 the Department of State, the United States  
17 Agency for International Development, the De-  
18 partment of the Treasury, the Department of  
19 Labor, the Department of Education, the De-  
20 partment of Agriculture, and the Department of  
21 Defense, the Chief Executive Officer of the Mil-  
22 lennium Challenge Corporation, the National  
23 Security Advisor, and the Director of the Peace  
24 Corps.

1           “(I) SUSTAINABILITY.—The term ‘sustain-  
2           ability’ means, with respect to any basic edu-  
3           cation program that receives funding pursuant  
4           to this section, the ability of a service delivery  
5           system, community, partner, or beneficiary to  
6           maintain, over time, such basic education pro-  
7           gram without the use of foreign assistance.

8           “(2) POLICY.—In carrying out this section, it  
9           shall be the policy of the United States to work with  
10          partner countries, as appropriate, other donors, mul-  
11          tilateral institutions, the private sector, and non-  
12          governmental and civil society organizations, includ-  
13          ing faith-based organizations and organizations that  
14          represent teachers, students, and parents, to pro-  
15          mote sustainable, quality basic education through  
16          programs and activities that—

17               “(A) take into consideration and help re-  
18               spond to the needs, capacities, and commitment  
19               of developing countries to achieve measurable  
20               improvements in literacy, numeracy, and other  
21               basic skills development that prepare an indi-  
22               vidual to be an active, productive member of so-  
23               ciety and the workforce;

24               “(B) strengthen educational systems, pro-  
25               mote communities of learning, as appropriate,

1 expand access to safe learning environments, in-  
2 cluding by breaking down specific barriers to  
3 basic education for women and girls, ensure  
4 continuity of education, including in conflict  
5 settings, measurably improve teacher skills and  
6 learning outcomes, and support the engagement  
7 of parents in the education of their children to  
8 help partner countries ensure that all children,  
9 including marginalized children and other vul-  
10 nerable groups, have access to and benefit from  
11 quality basic education;

12 “(C) promote education as a foundation  
13 for sustained economic growth and development  
14 within a comprehensive assistance strategy that  
15 places partner countries on a trajectory toward  
16 graduation from assistance provided under this  
17 section with clearly defined benchmarks of suc-  
18 cess that are used as requirements for related  
19 procurement vehicles, such as grants, contracts,  
20 and cooperative agreements; and

21 “(D) monitor and evaluate the effective-  
22 ness and quality of basic education programs in  
23 partner countries.

24 “(3) PRINCIPLES.—In carrying out the policy  
25 referred to in paragraph (2), the United States shall

1 be guided by the following principles of aid effective-  
2 ness:

3 “(A) ALIGNMENT.—Assistance provided  
4 under this section to support programs and ac-  
5 tivities under this subsection shall be aligned  
6 with and advance United States foreign policy  
7 and economic interests.

8 “(B) COUNTRY OWNERSHIP.—To the  
9 greatest extent practicable, assistance provided  
10 under this section to support programs and ac-  
11 tivities under this subsection should be aligned  
12 with and support the national education plans  
13 and country development strategies of partner  
14 countries, including activities that are appro-  
15 priate for and meet the needs of local and in-  
16 digenous cultures.

17 “(C) COORDINATION.—

18 “(i) IN GENERAL.—Assistance pro-  
19 vided under this section to support pro-  
20 grams and activities under this subsection  
21 should be coordinated with and leverage  
22 the unique capabilities and resources of  
23 local and national governments in partner  
24 countries, other donors, multilateral insti-  
25 tutions, the private sector, and nongovern-

1           mental and civil society organizations, in-  
2           cluding faith-based organizations and orga-  
3           nizations that represent teachers, students,  
4           and parents.

5           “(ii) MULTILATERAL PROGRAMS AND  
6           INITIATIVES.—Assistance provided under  
7           this section to support programs and ac-  
8           tivities under this subsection should be co-  
9           ordinated with and support proven multi-  
10          lateral education programs and financing  
11          mechanisms, which may include the Global  
12          Partnership for Education, that dem-  
13          onstrate commitment to efficiency, effec-  
14          tiveness, transparency, and accountability.

15          “(D) EFFICIENCY.—The President shall  
16          seek to improve the efficiency and effectiveness  
17          of assistance provided under this section to sup-  
18          port programs and activities under this sub-  
19          section by coordinating the related efforts of  
20          relevant Executive branch agencies and offi-  
21          cials.

22          “(E) EFFECTIVENESS.—Programs and ac-  
23          tivities supported under this subsection—

1 “(i) shall be consistent with the poli-  
2 cies and principles set forth in this sub-  
3 section;

4 “(ii) shall be designed to achieve spe-  
5 cific, measurable goals and objectives that  
6 are directly related to the provision of  
7 basic education (as defined in this section);  
8 and

9 “(iii) shall include appropriate tar-  
10 gets, metrics, and indicators that—

11 “(I) move a country along the  
12 path to graduation from assistance  
13 provided under this subsection; and

14 “(II) can be applied with reason-  
15 able consistency across such programs  
16 and activities to measure progress and  
17 outcomes.

18 “(F) TRANSPARENCY AND ACCOUNT-  
19 ABILITY.—Programs and activities supported  
20 under this subsection shall be subject to rig-  
21 orous monitoring and evaluation, which may in-  
22 clude impact evaluations, the results of which  
23 shall be made publically available in a fully  
24 searchable, electronic format.

1           “(4) PRIORITY AND OTHER REQUIREMENTS.—  
2           The President shall ensure that assistance provided  
3           under this section to support programs and activities  
4           under this subsection is aligned with the foreign pol-  
5           icy and economic interests of the United States and,  
6           subject to such alignment, priority is given to devel-  
7           oping countries in which—

8                   “(A) there is the greatest need and oppor-  
9                   tunity to expand access to basic education and  
10                  to improve learning outcomes, including for  
11                  marginalized and vulnerable groups, particu-  
12                  larly women and girls to ensure gender parity  
13                  in basic education, or populations affected by  
14                  conflict or crisis; and

15                   “(B) such assistance can produce a sub-  
16                   stantial, measurable impact on children and  
17                   educational systems.”.

18 **SEC. 4. COMPREHENSIVE INTEGRATED UNITED STATES**  
19 **STRATEGY TO PROMOTE BASIC EDUCATION.**

20           (a) STRATEGY REQUIRED.—Not later than October  
21 1, 2017, the President shall submit to the appropriate con-  
22 gressional committees a comprehensive United States  
23 strategy to be carried out during fiscal years 2018 through  
24 2022 to promote quality basic education in partner coun-  
25 tries by—

1           (1) seeking to equitably expand access to basic  
2           education for all children, particularly marginalized  
3           children and vulnerable groups; and

4           (2) measurably improving the quality of basic  
5           education and learning outcomes.

6           (b) REQUIREMENT TO CONSULT.—In developing the  
7           strategy required under subsection (a), the President shall  
8           consult with—

9           (1) the appropriate congressional committees;

10           (2) relevant Executive branch agencies and offi-  
11           cials;

12           (3) partner country governments; and

13           (4) local and international nongovernmental or-  
14           ganizations, including faith-based organizations and  
15           organizations representing students, teachers, and  
16           parents, and other development partners engaged in  
17           basic education assistance programs in developing  
18           countries.

19           (c) PUBLIC COMMENT.—The President shall provide  
20           an opportunity for public comment on the strategy re-  
21           quired under subsection (a).

22           (d) ELEMENTS.—The strategy required under sub-  
23           section (a)—

24           (1) shall be developed and implemented con-  
25           sistent with the principles set forth in section 105(c)

1 of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961, as added by  
2 section 3; and

3 (2) shall seek—

4 (A) to prioritize assistance provided under  
5 this subsection to countries that are partners of  
6 the United States and whose populations are  
7 most in need of improved basic education, as  
8 determined by indicators such as literacy and  
9 numeracy rates;

10 (B) to build the capacity of relevant actors  
11 in partner countries, including in government  
12 and in civil society, to develop and implement  
13 national education plans that measurably im-  
14 prove basic education;

15 (C) to identify and replicate successful  
16 interventions that improve access to and quality  
17 of basic education in conflict settings and in  
18 partner countries;

19 (D) to project general levels of resources  
20 needed to achieve stated program objectives;

21 (E) to develop means to track implementa-  
22 tion in partner countries and ensure that such  
23 countries are expending appropriate domestic  
24 resources and instituting any relevant legal,

1 regulatory, or institutional reforms needed to  
2 achieve stated program objectives;

3 (F) to leverage United States capabilities,  
4 including through technical assistance, training,  
5 and research; and

6 (G) to improve coordination and reduce  
7 duplication among relevant Executive branch  
8 agencies and officials, other donors, multilateral  
9 institutions, nongovernmental organizations,  
10 and governments in partner countries.

11 **SEC. 5. IMPROVING COORDINATION AND OVERSIGHT.**

12 (a) SENIOR COORDINATOR OF UNITED STATES  
13 INTERNATIONAL BASIC EDUCATION ASSISTANCE.—There  
14 is established within the United States Agency for Inter-  
15 national Development a Senior Coordinator of United  
16 States International Basic Education Assistance (referred  
17 to in this section as the “Senior Coordinator”). The Senior  
18 Coordinator shall be appointed by the President, shall be  
19 a current USAID employee serving in a career or non-  
20 career position in the Senior Executive Service or at the  
21 level of a Deputy Assistant Administrator or higher, and  
22 shall serve concurrently as the Senior Coordinator.

23 (b) DUTIES.—

24 (1) IN GENERAL.—The Senior Coordinator  
25 shall have primary responsibility for the oversight

1 and coordination of all resources and activities of the  
2 United States Government relating to the promotion  
3 of international basic education programs and activi-  
4 ties.

5 (2) SPECIFIC DUTIES.—The Senior Coordinator  
6 shall—

7 (A) facilitate program and policy coordina-  
8 tion of international basic education programs  
9 and activities among relevant Executive branch  
10 agencies and officials, partner governments,  
11 multilateral institutions, the private sector, and  
12 nongovernmental and civil society organizations;

13 (B) develop and revise the strategy re-  
14 quired under section 4;

15 (C) monitor, evaluate, and report on activi-  
16 ties undertaken pursuant to the strategy re-  
17 quired under section 4; and

18 (D) establish due diligence criteria for all  
19 recipients of funds provided by the United  
20 States to carry out activities under this Act and  
21 the amendments made by this Act.

22 (c) OFFSET.—In order to eliminate duplication of ef-  
23 fort and activities and to offset any costs incurred by the  
24 United States Agency for International Development in  
25 appointing the Senior Coordinator under subsection (a),

1 the President shall, after consulting with appropriate con-  
2 gressional committees, eliminate a position within the  
3 United States Agency for International Development (un-  
4 less otherwise authorized or required by law) that the  
5 President determines to be necessary to fully offset such  
6 costs and eliminate duplication.

7 **SEC. 6. MONITORING AND EVALUATION OF PROGRAMS.**

8 The President shall seek to ensure that programs car-  
9 ried out under the strategy required under section 4  
10 shall—

11 (1) apply rigorous monitoring and evaluation  
12 methodologies to determine if programs and activi-  
13 ties provided under this subsection accomplish meas-  
14 urable improvements in literacy, numeracy, or other  
15 basic skills development that prepare an individual  
16 to be an active, productive member of society and  
17 the workforce;

18 (2) include methodological guidance in the im-  
19 plementation plan and support systemic data collec-  
20 tion using internationally comparable indicators,  
21 norms, and methodologies, to the extent practicable  
22 and appropriate;

23 (3) disaggregate all data collected and reported  
24 by age, gender, marital status, disability, and loca-  
25 tion, to the extent practicable and appropriate;

1 (4) include funding for both short- and long-  
2 term monitoring and evaluation to enable assess-  
3 ment of the sustainability and scalability of assist-  
4 ance programs; and

5 (5) support the increased use and public avail-  
6 ability of education data for improved decision mak-  
7 ing, program effectiveness, and monitoring of global  
8 progress.

9 **SEC. 7. TRANSPARENCY AND REPORTING TO CONGRESS.**

10 (a) ANNUAL REPORT ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF  
11 STRATEGY.—Not later than each March 31 immediately  
12 following a fiscal year during which the strategy developed  
13 pursuant to section 4(a) was carried out, the President  
14 shall—

15 (1) submit a report to the appropriate congress-  
16 sional committees that describes the implementation  
17 of such strategy; and

18 (2) make the report described in paragraph (1)  
19 available to the public.

20 (b) MATTERS TO BE INCLUDED.—The report re-  
21 quired under subsection (a) shall include—

22 (1) a description of the efforts made by relevant  
23 Executive branch agencies and officials to implement  
24 the strategy developed pursuant to section 4, with a

1 particular focus on the activities carried out under  
2 the strategy;

3 (2) a description of the extent to which each  
4 partner country selected to receive assistance for  
5 basic education meets the priority criteria specified  
6 in section 105(c) of the Foreign Assistance Act, as  
7 added by section 3; and

8 (3) a description of the progress achieved over  
9 the reporting period toward meeting the goals, objec-  
10 tives, benchmarks, and timeframes specified in the  
11 strategy developed pursuant to section 4 at the pro-  
12 gram level, as developed pursuant to monitoring and  
13 evaluation specified in section 6, with particular em-  
14 phasis on whether there are demonstrable student  
15 improvements in literacy, numeracy, or other basic  
16 skills development that prepare an individual to be  
17 an active, productive member of society and the  
18 workforce.

Passed the House of Representatives January 24,  
2017.

Attest:

*Clerk.*

115<sup>TH</sup> CONGRESS  
1<sup>ST</sup> SESSION

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**H. R. 601**

**AN ACT**

To enhance the transparency and accelerate the impact of assistance provided under the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 to promote quality basic education in developing countries, to better enable such countries to achieve universal access to quality basic education and improved learning outcomes, to eliminate duplication and waste, and for other purposes.