

111TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

H. R. 4886

To permanently authorize Radio Free Asia, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

MARCH 18, 2010

Mr. ROYCE (for himself, Mr. BERMAN, Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN, and Mr. SCHIFF)
introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on
Foreign Affairs

A BILL

To permanently authorize Radio Free Asia, 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. FINDINGS.**

4 Congress finds the following:

5 (1) Radio Free Asia (in this Act referred to as
6 “RFA”)—

7 (A) was authorized under section 309 of
8 the United States International Broadcasting
9 Act of 1994 (22 U.S.C. 6208);

1 (B) was incorporated as a private, non-
2 profit corporation in March 1996 in the hope
3 that its operations would soon be obviated by
4 the global advancement of democracy; and

5 (C) is headquartered in Washington, DC,
6 with additional offices in Bangkok, Hong Kong,
7 Phnom Penh, Seoul, Ankara, Taipei, and
8 Dharamsala.

9 (2) RFA acts as a “surrogate” news service, in
10 which its broadcasts serve as substitutes for indige-
11 nous free media in regions lacking free media out-
12 lets.

13 (3) The mission of RFA is “to provide accurate
14 and timely news and information to Asian countries
15 whose governments prohibit access to a free press”
16 in order to enable informed decisionmaking by the
17 people within Asia.

18 (4) The “surrogate” broadcasting model was
19 used effectively in Eastern Europe, helping to in-
20 spire democrats and create space for civil society.

21 (5) RFA provides daily broadcasts of news,
22 commentary, analysis, and cultural programming to
23 Asian countries in several of the region’s languages.

1 (6) The governments of the countries targeted
2 for these broadcasts have actively sought to block
3 RFA's transmissions.

4 (7) RFA has provided continuous online news
5 to its Asian audiences since 2004, although some
6 countries—

7 (A) routinely and aggressively attempt to
8 block RFA's website;

9 (B) monitor access to RFA's website; and

10 (C) discourage online users by making it il-
11 legal to access RFA's website.

12 (8) Despite these attempts, RFA has managed
13 to reach its online audiences through proxies, cut-
14 ting-edge software, and active republication and re-
15 postings by its audience.

16 (9) RFA also provides forums for local opinions
17 and experiences through message boards, podcasts,
18 web logs (blogs), cell phone-distributed newscasts,
19 and new media, including Facebook, Flickr, Twitter,
20 and YouTube.

21 (10) Freedom House has documented that free-
22 dom of the press is in decline in nearly every region
23 of the world, particularly in Asia, where none of the
24 countries served by RFA have increased their free-
25 dom of the press during the past five years.

1 (11) Independent media sources are nonexistent
2 or severely restrained in their operations in these
3 areas where the press often serves as a means to
4 promote the government's agenda.

5 (12) Congress currently provides grant funding
6 for RFA's operations on a fiscal year basis.

7 (13) RFA's sunset provision has hampered its
8 operations, such as hiring staff and negotiating cost
9 effective lease and capital agreements.

10 **SEC. 2. SENSE OF CONGRESS.**

11 It is the sense of Congress that—

12 (1) public access to timely, uncensored, and ac-
13 curate information is imperative for achieving gov-
14 ernment accountability, the protection of human
15 rights, and the promotion of democratic values and
16 institutions;

17 (2) Radio Free Asia provides a vital and unique
18 voice to people in Asia;

19 (3) in the 14 years since RFA was established,
20 freedom of the press in Asia has come under intensi-
21 fied attack;

22 (4) some of the governments in Asia spend mil-
23 lions of dollars each year to jam RFA's broadcasts,
24 block its Internet sites, and illegally access RFA's
25 computer networks and user files;

(5) the United States should continue to support RFA and the other entities overseen by the Broadcasting Board of Governors for—

(A) Internet censorship circumvention; and

(B) enhancement of their cyber security efforts; and

(6) permanently authorizing funding for Radio Free Asia would—

(A) reflect the concern that media censorship and press restrictions in the countries served by RFA have increased since RFA was established;

(B) send a powerful signal of United States support for a free press in Asia and throughout the world; and

(C) enhance the efficiency of RFA's operations.

SEC. 3. PERMANENT AUTHORIZATION FOR RADIO FREE ASIA.

Section 309 of the United States International Broadcasting Act of 1994 (22 U.S.C. 6208) is amended—

(1) in subsection (c)(2), by striking “, and shall further specify that funds to carry out the activities of Radio Free Asia may not be available after September 30, 2010”;

- 1 (2) by striking subsection (f); and
- 2 (3) by redesignating subsections (g) and (h) as
- 3 subsection (f) and (g), respectively.

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