

116TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

H. R. 7234

To strengthen the Mutual Defense Treaty between the United States and
the Republic of Korea, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

JUNE 18, 2020

Mr. BERA introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee
on Foreign Affairs

A BILL

To strengthen the Mutual Defense Treaty between the
United States and the Republic of Korea, and for other
purposes.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “We Go Together Act”.

5 **SEC. 2. SENSE OF CONGRESS.**

6 It is the sense of Congress that—

7 (1) with respect to the alliance between the
8 United States and the Republic of Korea—

9 (A) “we go together” or “katchi kapshida”

10 is an enduring motto inspired by the shared

1 sacrifice of the United States and the Republic
2 of Korea during the Korean War, reinforced by
3 our shared values and reaffirmed each time the
4 Republic of Korea has stood alongside the
5 United States in the four major wars the
6 United States has fought outside Korea since
7 1945;

8 (B) a transactional view of the alliance be-
9 tween the United States and the Republic of
10 Korea is contrary to the spirit of “we go to-
11 gether”;

12 (C) 70 years since the start of the Korean
13 War, as the People’s Republic of China esca-
14 lates its aggressive behavior in maritime and air
15 domains and the Democratic People’s Republic
16 of Korea continues to enhance and test weapons
17 that threaten regional peace and security, a new
18 strategic environment in the Indo-Pacific region
19 has reinforced the importance of the alliance
20 between the United States and the Republic of
21 Korea;

22 (D) the 2018 National Defense Strategy
23 states that “the willingness of rivals to abandon
24 aggression will depend on their perception of
25 . . . the vitality of our alliances and partner-

ships”, and thus United States Government actions and public statements that undermine the United States relationship with the Republic of Korea harm United States national security and exacerbate risks to members of the Armed Forces and United States allies and partners; and

(E) United States alliances and troop deployments should be based on shared principles and goals, not on the profit motive; and

(2) with respect to nationals of the Republic of Korea who are employees of United States Forces Korea—

(A) the United States Government should endeavor to avoid actions that negatively affect the welfare or well-being of such individuals;

(B) as stated by the Commander of United States Forces Korea on March 31, 2020, the partial furlough of such individuals was “heart-breaking” and “in no way a reflection of their performance, dedication, or conduct”; and

(C) the United States Government should work with the Government of the Republic of Korea to ensure that such individuals do not

1 bear the burden of breakdowns in negotiations
2 regarding defense cost-sharing.

3 **SEC. 3. STRENGTHENING THE MUTUAL DEFENSE TREATY.**

4 (a) IN GENERAL.—The President may not take any
5 action to change United States policy with respect to the
6 Mutual Defense Treaty between the United States and
7 Republic of Korea signed on October 1, 1953, unless, not
8 later than 120 days before the President takes such an
9 action, the Secretary of Defense and the Secretary of
10 State submit to the appropriate committees of Congress—

11 (1) a detailed justification for such a change;

12 and

13 (2) a certification that—

14 (A) such a change is in the national inter-
15 est of the United States; and

16 (B) an alternative diplomatic agreement or
17 measure has been devised to replace any lost
18 capacity or benefits resulting from such a
19 change, including—

20 (i) the benefits to United States na-
21 tional security and regional security de-
22 rived from the presence of the United
23 States Armed Forces in the Republic of
24 Korea;

1 (ii) the nuclear nonproliferation bene-
2 fits derived from extended deterrence en-
3 hanced by the stationing of members of the
4 United States Armed Forces in the Repub-
5 lic of Korea;

6 (iii) the contributions of the Republic
7 of Korea in—

8 (I) countering illegitimate coer-
9 cion and debt diplomacy;

10 (II) promoting human rights;

11 (III) promoting freedom of navi-
12 gation and maritime security;

13 (IV) protecting the environment;

14 (V) improving global health; and

15 (VI) assisting the victims of con-
16 flict and disaster;

17 (iv) the cooperation of the Republic of
18 Korea with respect to United States efforts
19 to enforce existing United Nations Security
20 Council sanctions with respect to the
21 Democratic People's Republic of Korea;

22 (v) the diplomatic support of the Re-
23 public of Korea for negotiations to imple-
24 ment the commitments of the Democratic

1 People’s Republic of Korea at the 2018
2 Singapore Summit; and
3 (vi) the value of United States trade
4 with the Republic of Korea.

5 (b) FORM.—The justification and certification re-
6 quired by subsection (a) shall be submitted in unclassified
7 form, but may include a classified annex.

8 (c) APPROPRIATE COMMITTEES OF CONGRESS DE-
9 FINED.—In this section, the term “appropriate commit-
10 tees of Congress” means—

11 (1) the Committee on Armed Services and the
12 Committee on Foreign Relations of the Senate; and
13 (2) the Committee on Armed Services and the
14 Committee on Foreign Affairs of the House of Rep-
15 resentatives.

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