

116TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

S. 357

To require annual reports on religious intolerance in Saudi Arabian educational materials, and for other purposes.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

FEBRUARY 6, 2019

Mr. RUBIO (for himself, Mr. WYDEN, and Mr. MARKEY) introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations

A BILL

To require annual reports on religious intolerance in Saudi Arabian educational materials, 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 “Saudi Educational
5 Transparency and Reform Act”.

6 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

7 Congress finds the following:

8 (1) The Government of the Kingdom of Saudi
9 Arabia for more than 15 years has made incre-

1 mental progress in removing intolerant content in
2 state-published textbooks.

3 (2) Saudi Arabia has committed to educational
4 reforms through its Vision 2030 and National
5 Transformation Program, and is an important part-
6 ner of the United States in combating terrorism and
7 violent extremism.

8 (3) The 2006 “confirmation of policies” nego-
9 tiated by the United States and Saudi Arabia stated
10 that textbooks would be revised within one or two
11 years “to remove remaining intolerant references
12 that disparage Muslims or non-Muslims or that pro-
13 mote hatred toward other religions or religious
14 groups.”.

15 (4) According to the Department of State’s Au-
16 gust 2017 International Religious Freedom Report,
17 “[t]he government continued to distribute revised
18 textbooks, although some intolerant material re-
19 mained in circulation, particularly at the high school
20 level, including content justifying the execution of
21 ‘sorcerers’ ” and social exclusion of non-Muslims.

22 (5) Saudi textbooks have been exported inter-
23 nationally, including to countries in the Middle East,
24 Africa, South, Central, and South East Asia, and
25 parts of Europe and North America.

1 (6) The International Religious Freedom Act of
2 1998 requires the President to designate countries
3 in which violations of religious freedom are “system-
4 atic, ongoing, [and] egregious” as countries of par-
5 ticular concern.

6 (7) The President has designated Saudi Arabia
7 as a country of particular concern since 2004, pur-
8 suant to the International Religious Freedom Act of
9 1998, and a waiver of further action has been in
10 place since 2006.

11 **SEC. 3. SENSE OF CONGRESS.**

12 It is the sense of Congress that, in spite of some
13 progress, Saudi Arabia has not yet sufficiently met its
14 commitments for eliminating all forms of incitement from
15 its educational materials and curriculum in line with its
16 commitments to combat terrorism and violent extremism.

17 **SEC. 4. REPORTS.**

18 (a) IN GENERAL.—Subject to subsection (d), not
19 later than 120 days after the date of the enactment of
20 this Act and every year thereafter within 90 days of the
21 start of the new school year in Saudi Arabia for the next
22 ten years, the Secretary of State shall submit to the Com-
23 mittee on Foreign Affairs of the House of Representatives
24 and the Committee on Foreign Relations of the Senate
25 a report reviewing educational materials published by

1 Saudi Arabia's Ministry of Education that are used in
2 schools both inside the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and at
3 schools throughout the world.

4 (b) CONSULTATION.—Not later than 30 days after
5 the submission of a report under subsection (a), the Sec-
6 retary of State shall consult with the Committee on For-
7 eign Affairs of the House of Representatives and the Com-
8 mittee on Foreign Relations of the Senate on the contents
9 of each such report.

10 (c) CONTENTS.—The reports required under sub-
11 section (b) should include the following:

12 (1) A detailed determination regarding whether
13 all intolerant content has been removed from edu-
14 cational materials published by Saudi Arabia's Min-
15 istry of Education that are used in schools both in-
16 side the Saudi Arabia and at schools throughout the
17 world, including full quotations of all passages that
18 could be seen as encouraging violence or intolerance
19 towards adherents of religions other than Islam or
20 towards Muslims who hold dissenting views.

21 (2) A detailed assessment of the global expor-
22 tation of such materials, including the extent to
23 which such materials are used in privately funded
24 educational institutions overseas.

1 (3) A detailed summary of actions the Saudi
2 Government has taken to retrieve and destroy mate-
3 rials with intolerant material.

4 (4) A detailed assessment of the Saudi Govern-
5 ment's efforts to revise teacher manuals and retrain
6 teachers to reflect changes in educational materials
7 and promote tolerance.

8 (5) A detailed determination regarding whether
9 issuing a waiver regarding Saudi Arabia as a coun-
10 try of particular concern under the International Re-
11 ligious Freedom Act of 1998 furthers the purposes
12 of such Act or is otherwise in the important national
13 security interests of the United States.

14 (d) TERMINATION.—

15 (1) BEFORE TEN YEARS.—If at any time after
16 submission of a report required under subsection (a)
17 but before the expiration of the 10-year period re-
18 ferred to in such subsection, the Secretary of State
19 determines that intolerant religious content has been
20 removed completely from Saudi Arabia's education
21 materials, the requirement to submit any remaining
22 reports under such subsection shall not apply.

23 (2) AT TEN YEARS.—If at the end of the 10-
24 year period referred to in subsection (a), the Sec-
25 retary of State determines that intolerant religious

1 content remains in Saudi Arabia's education mate-
2 rials, the termination of the requirement to submit
3 reports under such subsection shall not apply and
4 such reports shall be submitted for a further five
5 years.

6 (e) FORM.—Reports under this section shall be sub-
7 mitted in an unclassified form, but may contain a classi-
8 fied annex.

9 **SEC. 5. TRANSPARENCY.**

10 Not later than 60 days after the submission of the
11 annual reports required under section 4, the Secretary of
12 State shall make copies of reviewed Saudi educational ma-
13 terials publicly available on a website of the Department
14 of State.

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