

117TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

S. 4648

To provide for the establishment of United States embassies in the Republic of Vanuatu, the Republic of Kiribati, and the Kingdom of Tonga, and for other purposes.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

JULY 27, 2022

Mr. OSSOFF (for himself, Mr. YOUNG, Mrs. BLACKBURN, Mr. SCHATZ, and Ms. HIRONO) introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations

A BILL

To provide for the establishment of United States embassies in the Republic of Vanuatu, the Republic of Kiribati, and the Kingdom of Tonga, 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 “Pacific Islands Embas-
5 sies Act”.

6 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

7 Congress makes the following findings:

1 (1) The Pacific Islands are vital to United
2 States national security and national interests in the
3 Indo-Pacific region and globally.

4 (2) The Pacific Islands region spans 15 percent
5 of the world's surface area and controls access to
6 open waters in the Central Pacific, sea lanes to the
7 Western Hemisphere, supply lines to United States
8 forward-deployed forces in East Asia, and economi-
9 cally important fisheries.

10 (3) The Pacific Islands region is home to the
11 State of Hawaii, 11 United States territories, United
12 States Naval Base Guam, and United States Ander-
13 sen Air Force Base.

14 (4) Pacific Island countries cooperate with the
15 United States and United States partners on mari-
16 time security and efforts to stop illegal, unreported,
17 and destructive fishing.

18 (5) The Pacific Islands are rich in biodiversity
19 and on the frontlines of sea level rise, worsening
20 tropical storms, and coral reef loss associated with
21 climate change.

22 (6) The People's Republic of China (PRC)
23 seeks to increase its influence in the Pacific Islands
24 region, including through infrastructure development

1 under the PRC's Belt and Road Initiative and its
2 new security agreement with the Solomon Islands.

3 (7) The United States Embassy in Papua New
4 Guinea manages the diplomatic affairs of the United
5 States to the Republic of Vanuatu, and the United
6 States Embassy in Fiji manages the diplomatic af-
7 fairs of the United States to the Republic of Kiribati
8 and the Kingdom of Tonga.

9 (8) The United States requires a physical diplo-
10 matic presence in the Republic of Vanuatu, the Re-
11 public of Kiribati, and the Kingdom of Tonga, to en-
12 sure the physical and operation security of our ef-
13 forts in those countries to deepen relations, protect
14 United States national security, and pursue United
15 States national interests.

16 (9) Increasing the number of United States em-
17 bassies dedicated solely to a Pacific Island country
18 demonstrates the United States ongoing commit-
19 ment to the region and to the Pacific Island coun-
20 tries.

21 **SEC. 3. ESTABLISHMENT OF EMBASSIES.**

22 (a) ESTABLISHMENT OF UNITED STATES EMBASSIES
23 IN VANUATU, KIRIBATI, AND TONGA.—As soon as pos-
24 sible, and not later than 2 years after the date of the en-
25 actment of this Act, the Secretary of State shall establish

1 physical United States embassies in the Republic of
2 Vanuatu, the Republic of Kiribati, and the Kingdom of
3 Tonga and recommend to the President ambassadors to
4 lead each of these 3 embassies.

5 (b) OTHER STRATEGIES.—In establishing embassies
6 pursuant to subsection (a) and creating the physical infra-
7 structure to ensure the physical and operational safety of
8 embassy personnel, the Secretary of State may pursue
9 strategies such as renting or purchasing an existing build-
10 ing or colocation of embassies with like-minded partners
11 like Australia and New Zealand.

12 (c) WAIVER AUTHORITY.—The President may waive
13 the requirements under subsection (a) for a period of one
14 year if the President determines and reports to Congress
15 in advance that such waiver is necessary to protect the
16 national security interests of the United States.

17 **SEC. 4. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.**

18 There is authorized to be appropriated for the De-
19 partment of State—

20 (1) \$40,200,000 for fiscal year 2023 for em-
21 bassy construction and maintenance of the 3 embas-
22 sies to be established pursuant to section 3; and

23 (2) \$3,000,000 for fiscal year 2024 to maintain
24 the embassies.

1 **SEC. 5. REPORT.**

2 (a) **PROGRESS REPORT.**—Not later than 180 days
3 following the date of the enactment of this Act, the Sec-
4 retary of State shall submit to the appropriate congres-
5 sional committees a report that includes—

6 (1) a description of the status of activities car-
7 ried out to achieve the objectives described in this
8 Act;

9 (2) an estimate of when embassies will be fully
10 established pursuant to section 3(a); and

11 (3) an update on events in the Pacific Islands
12 region relevant to the establishment of United States
13 embassies, including activities by the People’s Re-
14 public of China.

15 (b) **REPORT ON FINAL DISPOSITION.**—Not later than
16 2 years after the date of the enactment of this Act, the
17 Secretary of State shall submit a report confirming the
18 establishment of the 3 embassies required under section
19 3(a).

20 (c) **APPROPRIATE CONGRESSIONAL COMMITTEES.**—
21 In this section, the term “appropriate congressional com-
22 mittees” means—

23 (1) the Committee on Foreign Relations and
24 the Committee on Appropriations of the Senate; and

- 1 (2) the Committee on Foreign Relations and
- 2 the Committee on Appropriations of the House of
- 3 Representatives.

