

full access to credit" and inserting "micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises and households lacking full access to credit and other financial services"; and

(B) in paragraphs (1) and (2), by striking "microfinance institutions" each place such term appears and inserting "financial intermediaries";

(4) in subsection (c), in the matter preceding paragraph (1), by striking "microfinance institutions" and inserting "financial intermediaries"; and

(5) in subsections (c) and (d), by striking "microenterprise households" each place such term appears and inserting "micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises and households".

(g) UNITED STATES MICROFINANCE LOAN FACILITY.—Section 257 of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 (22 U.S.C. 2213) is amended—

(1) in subsection (a) —

(A) by striking "Administrator" and inserting "President";

(B) by striking "United States-supported microfinance institutions" and inserting "United States-supported financial intermediaries"; and

(2) in subsection (b)—

(A) in paragraph (1), by striking "United States-supported microfinance institutions" each place such term appears and inserting "United States-supported financial intermediaries"; and

(B) in paragraph (2), by striking "microfinance institutions" and inserting "financial intermediaries".

(h) CONTENTS OF REPORT.—Section 258(b) of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 (22 U.S.C. 2214(b)) is amended to read as follows:

"(b) CONTENTS.—To the extent practicable, the report submitted under subsection (a) should contain the following:

"(1) Information about assistance provided under section 252, including—

"(A) the amount of each grant or other form of assistance;

"(B) the name and type of each intermediary and implementing partner organization receiving assistance;

"(C) the name of each country receiving assistance; and

"(D) the methodology used to ensure compliance with the targeted assistance requirements under subsection (c) of such section.

"(2) The percentage of assistance provided under section 252, disaggregated by income level, including for the very poor, and by gender.

"(3) The estimated number of individuals that received assistance under section 252, disaggregated by income level (or an appropriate proxy for income level, including for the very poor), by gender, and by type of assistance.

"(4) The results of the monitoring system required under section 253.

"(5) Information about any method in place to assess poverty levels under section 254."

(i) DEFINITIONS.—Section 259 of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 (22 U.S.C. 2214a) is amended—

(1) in paragraph (3), by striking "Committee on International Relations of the House of Representatives" and inserting "Committee on Foreign Affairs of the House of Representatives";

(2) in paragraph (4), by striking "microenterprises" and inserting "micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises";

(3) in paragraph (6)—

(A) in subparagraph (E), by striking "microenterprise institution" and inserting "micro, small, or medium-sized enterprise institution"; and

(B) in subparagraph (F), by striking "microfinance institution" and inserting "financial intermediary";

(4) by striking paragraphs (7) and (8) and inserting the following:

"(7) MICRO, SMALL, AND MEDIUM-SIZED ENTERPRISE INSTITUTION.—The term 'micro, small, and

medium-sized enterprise institution' means an entity that provides services, including finance, training, or business development services, for micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises in foreign countries.

"(8) FINANCIAL INTERMEDIARY.—The term 'financial intermediary' means the entity that acts as the intermediary between parties in a financial transaction, such as a bank, credit union, investment fund, a village savings and loan group, or an institution that provides financial services to a micro, small, or medium-sized enterprise";

(5) by striking paragraph (9);

(6) by redesignating paragraphs (10) through (14) as paragraphs (9) through (13), respectively;

(7) in paragraph (9), as redesignated, by striking "of microenterprise development";

(8) by amending paragraph (10), as redesignated, to read as follows:

"(10) PRACTITIONER INSTITUTION.—The term 'practitioner institution' means a not-for-profit entity, a financial intermediary, an information and communications technology firm with a mobile money platform, a village and savings loan group, or any other entity that provides financial or business development services authorized under section 252 that benefits micro, small, and medium-sized enterprise clients.";

(9) in paragraph (12), as redesignated—

(A) in the paragraph heading, by striking "UNITED STATES-SUPPORTED MICROFINANCE INSTITUTION" and inserting "UNITED STATES-SUPPORTED FINANCIAL INTERMEDIARY"; and

(B) by striking "United States-supported microfinance institution" and inserting "United States-supported financial intermediary"; and

(10) in paragraph (13), as redesignated, by amending subparagraph (B) to read as follows:

"(B) living below the international poverty line (as defined by the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development and the International Development Association (collectively referred to as the 'World Bank'))."

(j) TECHNICAL AND CONFORMING AMENDMENT.—Title VI of chapter 2 of part I of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 (22 U.S.C. 2211 et seq.) is amended in the title heading by striking "MICROENTERPRISE DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE" and inserting "DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE FOR MICRO, SMALL, AND MEDIUM-SIZED ENTERPRISES".

SEC. 5. REPORT AND BRIEFING BY THE UNITED STATES AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 1 year after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Administrator of the United States Agency for International Development shall provide a briefing and submit a report to the Committee on Foreign Affairs of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Foreign Relations of the Senate regarding the implementation of this Act and the amendments made by this Act, including actions to improve the gender policies of the United States Agency for International Development pursuant to section 3.

(b) PUBLIC AVAILABILITY.—The report required under subsection (a) shall be posted and made available on a text-based, searchable, and publicly-available internet website.

SEC. 6. REPORT BY THE COMPTROLLER GENERAL OF THE UNITED STATES.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 2 years after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Comptroller General of the United States shall submit a report to the Committee on Foreign Affairs of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Foreign Relations of the Senate regarding development assistance for micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises administered by the United States Agency for International Development.

(b) MATTERS TO BE INCLUDED.—The report required under subsection (a) shall include an assessment of the following:

(1) What is known about the impact of such development assistance on the economies of developing countries.

(2) The extent to which such development assistance is targeting women and the very poor, including what is known about how such development assistance benefits women.

(3) The extent to which the United States Agency for International Development has developed a methodology to ensure compliance with the targeted assistance requirement under section 252(c) of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961, as amended by section 4(b)(3), and the quality of such methodology.

(4) The monitoring system required under section 253(b) of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961, as amended by section 4(c), including the quality, appropriateness, and feasibility of such monitoring system.

Mr. BOOZMAN. I ask unanimous consent that the committee-reported amendment be agreed to and that the bill, as amended, be considered read a third time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

The committee-reported amendment was agreed to.

The bill, as amended, was ordered to be engrossed for a third reading and was read the third time.

Mr. BOOZMAN. I know of no further debate on the bill, as amended.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. If there is no further debate, the question is, Shall the bill pass?

The bill (S. 3247), as amended, was passed.

Mr. BOOZMAN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

ASIA REASSURANCE INITIATIVE ACT

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. LEE). The Senator from Colorado.

Mr. GARDNER. Mr. President, I ask that the Chair lay before the Senate the message to accompany S. 2736.

The Presiding Officer laid before the Senate the following message:

Resolved, That the bill from the Senate (S. 2736) entitled "An act to develop a long-term strategic vision and a comprehensive, multifaceted, and principled United States policy for the Indo-Pacific region, and for other purposes," do pass with an amendment.

MOTION TO CONCUR

Mr. GARDNER. Mr. President, I move to concur in the House amendment, and I ask unanimous consent that the motion be agreed to and that the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. GARDNER. Mr. President, I rise to celebrate a momentous bipartisan achievement—this bill that we just passed for our Nation's foreign policy.

Shortly, we will send this legislation, now—after its passage—to the President's desk: Gardner-Markey, also known as the Asia Reassurance Initiative Act.

I first want to thank an incredible partner throughout this entire effort,

Senator MARKEY and his staff, for their incredibly hard work on this bill and their efforts to get this bill over the finish line. I believe we have set a strong example of how major foreign policy can be accomplished in a very thorough and bipartisan fashion, and I look forward to our next effort together.

I also want to thank Senators CARDIN and RUBIO and their staffs, as well, for early and consistent support on this effort.

Thanks go to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee chairman, Senator CORKER, the ranking member, BOB MENENDEZ, and their staffs for helping to shepherd this effort through the Foreign Relations Committee, where ARIA passed unanimously on September 26, 2018.

I want to thank and extend my gratitude to the majority leader, KEVIN MCCARTHY, and his staff for their hard work to pass this bill through the House of Representatives with only minimal changes, by voice vote, last week.

Leader MCCONNELL and his staff took an early interest in this effort, and it could not have been done without their support.

I am grateful to Leader STENY HOYER, the chairman and ranking member of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, ED ROYCE and ELIOT ENGEL, and Representative ILLEANA ROS-LEHTINEN for their support.

Nearly 2 years in the making, the Gardner-Markey ARIA Initiative will establish a generational, multifaceted, and principled U.S. policy in the Indo-Pacific region, a region that is vital for U.S. national security and economic interests. ARIA is important because the Indo-Pacific is home to half of the world's population, half of the world's GDP, the world's largest standing armies, and six U.S. defense treaty allies.

The security and economic future of the United States depends on having the right policies to ensure a free and open Indo-Pacific. Therefore, the Gardner-Markey ARIA establishes and provides new resources for a long-term strategy to enhance security cooperation with our allies and establishes the Asia-Pacific security initiative.

It promotes American businesses through trade opportunities, projects American values of democracy, human rights, and the rule of law throughout the Indo-Pacific. It is a bill designed to drive U.S. leadership as other powers turn to economic colonialism.

Starting in June 2017, Senator MARKEY and I have held over five hearings at the East Asia and Pacific Subcommittee to inform this legislation. The hearings examined a range of national security, economic, and rule of law challenges in the Indo-Pacific and culminated in a final hearing with State Department and Department of Defense officials to allow the administration to express its views on ARIA.

We introduced ARIA on April 24 of this year with a bipartisan group that

included Senators RUBIO, CARDIN, and YOUNG. On June 21, we received a letter signed by Secretary Pompeo and Secretary Mattis formally endorsing ARIA. The letter states:

[We] value the ARIA legislation's reaffirmation of the United States' security commitments to our Indo-Pacific allies and partners. Furthermore, ARIA's focus on promoting stronger regional economic engagement—and its support for democracy, the rule of law, and the development of civil society—is especially welcome as part of a diplomatically-led whole-of-government approach to the Indo-Pacific region.

The Gardner-Markey ARIA passed the Foreign Relations Committee unanimously on September 26. It passed unanimously on the floor of the Senate on December 4, and the House passed ARIA by voice vote, as I mentioned, December 12.

This bill is a rare piece of bipartisan legislation that enjoys broad support in the Congress and the White House but is also strongly supported by the business community and policy experts.

On June 4, the Wall Street Journal editorial board endorsed ARIA, stating:

Congress is trying to help with the bipartisan Asia Reassurance Initiative Act. . . . The Senate bill affirms core American alliances with Australia, Japan, and South Korea, while calling for deeper military and economic ties with India and Taiwan. It notably encourages regular weapons sales to Taipei.

The U.S. Chamber of Commerce has also endorsed ARIA, stating:

The U.S. Chamber of Commerce supports the "Asia Reassurance Initiative Act of 2018" and thanks Senator Gardner [and Markey] for [their] efforts to strengthen U.S. strategic and economic relationships across the Indo-Pacific region.

Particularly with regard to the legislation's economic goals, we appreciate the bill's focus on closer trade ties, stronger protections for intellectual property, and a renewed focus on trade facilitation.

The Heritage Foundation wrote on December 6:

Don't look now, but a sweeping bill with bipartisan support in Congress and the backing of the Trump administration is one step closer to becoming reality. The Asia Reassurance Initiative Act, introduced by Sen. Cory Gardner . . . along with key cosponsors Ed Markey . . . and Marco Rubio . . . passed the Senate on Wednesday. This was a welcome display of leadership.

In these partisan times, the bill has garnered support from both current and former administration officials and experts across the political spectrum. As the Singapore-based Straits Times wrote on December 13:

Under the Obama administration, there was a big rhetorical commitment to the Asia Pacific or Indo-Pacific region, but the US "just flat out did not readjust our resources in a way that actually backed that up," said Dr. Lindsey Ford, Director of Political-Security Affairs for the Asia Society Policy Institute.

The ARIA marks an important start to rectifying that, she said.

"The ARIA . . . if passed, would be probably one of the most consequential pieces of funding legislation that has to do with Asia, that US Congress would have passed in years," Dr. Ford told Straits Times.

When you have the Heritage Foundation and former Obama administration officials on the same page, you know we have done something right.

So again, I want to congratulate this body—truly the world's most deliberative Chamber, as this bill has proved—for this bipartisan victory, and I hope the President will sign this important bill into law shortly.

Again, I want to thank my colleague, Senator MARKEY, for his tremendous leadership on this.

I yield the floor to Senator MARKEY.

Mr. MARKEY. Mr. President, I thank the Senator from Colorado, and I rise to echo the sentiments of the Senator from Colorado.

I first want to thank the Senator for all of his great work on this bill, for all of the hearings that took place in the subcommittee, all of the various interest groups who had to be worked with in order to make sure that this bill came to pass.

So I just want to thank the Senator from Colorado and thank his staff for the great work.

This bill is a historic bill. It is a very important bill. It could not have happened without the Senator, and I thank him for all of his incredible leadership on this issue.

I want to thank my own staff for all of their great work on this issue as well.

We had an incredible bipartisan partnership that was created between the Senator from Colorado and the Senator from Massachusetts, but our staffs worked very closely together.

This bill, the Gardner-Markey Asia Reassurance Initiative Act, is a very important bill, and I want to speak about this bill, but in doing so, I am actually speaking about something that is broader, something more important, something of more lasting consequence to international peace and stability, and something more critical to the economic well-being, security, and fundamental rights of Americans and millions of others around the globe.

America has always had an important relationship with the Indo-Pacific region, but the global landscape is changing, and today, more than ever, the Indo-Pacific is the most consequential region, not only for the United States but also for the rest of the world, and that is what this bill is all about. It is how we in the U.S. Congress can reaffirm that we, No. 1, are and will remain committed to the Indo-Pacific; No. 2, recognize its shifting dynamics and the significance these changes represent; and No. 3, stand ready to marshal the leadership and resources necessary to address the challenges we face and capitalize on the opportunities before us.

With that in mind, I again want to extend my gratitude to my partner in this endeavor, Senator GARDNER. He has been the best possible partner in this effort, and I want to thank him for everything he has done.

I also want to thank Senators CORKER and MENENDEZ for their assistance in advancing this bill through the Senate Foreign Relations Committee and a litany of saints who I think should all be mentioned: Senator RUBIO, Senator CARDIN, Senator YOUNG, Senator SULLIVAN, Senator PERDUE, Senator GRAHAM, Senator COONS, Senator KAINE, Senator PETERS, Senator WICKER—all cosponsors of this bill, perfectly bipartisan.

I also want to thank Representatives MCCARTHY and HOYER and NEAL and ROYCE and CASTRO and YOHO for their work as well. That list of Members is not only indicative of the level of bipartisanship there is in Congress but also on U.S.-Asia policy. This bill would not have been possible without them, and it would not have been possible without, again, the wonderful staffs we are blessed to have working on these issues, who spent many long hours advocating for key American interests and values in this legislation.

This bill represents a generational policy framework to enhance U.S. leadership in the Indo-Pacific and is a demonstration of American commitment to a free and open region, as well as the rules-based international order.

Zach Hosford and Mark Appleton on my staff dedicated the last year to working and partnering with the Senator. So I am pleased that the Gardner-Markey Asia Reassurance Initiative will pass the Senate today, and I look forward to its being sent on to the President's desk.

I again thank Senator GARDNER for all of his incredible work.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Mississippi.

RECOGNIZING THE EAST MISSISSIPPI LIONS, NJCAA CHAMPS

Mr. WICKER. Mr. President, I rise for a long overdue floor speech to recognize a school in my home State of Mississippi that continues to win national football championships, five, in fact, over the past 10 years.

I can assure my friends from Alabama that I am not trying to steal the thunder from the Crimson Tide. I am here to recognize the undefeated East Mississippi Community College Lions, who have become their own football dynasty and are the reigning National Junior College Athletic Association champs. NJCAA is commonly known as JUCO.

What makes the East Mississippi Community College football program special is the grit and determination that fuels its success. Some of these players are truly playing for their lives. They are the comeback kids, rising above adversity to get back into the game. The stories of these players are so inspirational that they won over the hearts of Americans in the Netflix documentary series, "Last Chance U."

In the first two seasons of that program, viewers had a prime spot in the

bleachers to watch East Mississippi's 2015 and 2016 football seasons. I will not reveal any spoilers, but the Lions have undeniable star power.

One of the compelling themes throughout the show is the belief in second chances. Past misbehavior or poor grades do not define these players or their futures. They have legions of fans cheering for their success and for the next touchdown. They have introduced to the Nation, if not the world, the small Mississippi town of Scooba, population 700. According to the show's trailer, "One of football's best recruiting grounds is a place you've never heard of," but now the secret is out.

I would like to congratulate the East Mississippi Lions as this year's JUCO champions and recognize the leadership of the head coach, Buddy Stephens, who only this afternoon was named National Coach of the Year for junior college football.

I also want to congratulate East Mississippi's six All-Americans this year, which was the most for any school except Iowa Western, which tied with them. These All-Americans include first team All-American wide receiver Dontario Drummond and second team running back Deon McIntosh, offensive lineman LaQuinston Sharp, and defensive lineman Everitt Cunningham. Honorable mentions went to quarterback Messiah deWeaver and return specialist DJ Clayton. There have been 32 All-Americans during Coach Stephens' 11-season tenure with the Lions.

Many East Mississippi players go on to 4-year universities and even pro football teams. LaGarrette Blount, running back for the Detroit Lions and a three-time Super Bowl champion, was a former East Mississippi Lion, and so was defensive back C.J. Reavis, who plays for the Jacksonville Jaguars. Other alumni currently playing in the NFL are defensive lineman Jarran Reed for the Seattle Seahawks, Za'Darius Smith for the Baltimore Ravens, Denico Autry for the Indianapolis Colts, and D.J. Jones for the San Francisco 49ers.

Although there is no question about East Mississippi's skills on the field, the team also earned the title of being the Football Academic Team of the Year among junior colleges, showing that the work goes far past the end zone.

Our State and Nation are proud of East Mississippi Community College's success. I am confident their football dynasty will continue, and I look forward to cheering them on to other championships in future years.

I thank the Presiding Officer.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. DAINES). The Senator from Delaware.

U.N. FRAMEWORK CONVENTION ON CLIMATE CHANGE

Mr. CARPER. Mr. President, I rise today with two of our colleagues, Senator ED MARKEY and Senator JEFF

MERKLEY, to reflect on the 24th session of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change that concluded just this last weekend in the country of Poland.

This important conference, which is better known as COP24, refers to Conference of Parties 24. I think they have been meeting for 24 years. They met there for 2 weeks as leaders from nearly 200 nations, working to reach an agreement on how our world will actually implement the Paris climate agreement.

The stakes could not be higher. I am not one, as my colleagues know, given to hyperbole, but the future of our planet and the future of our children and grandchildren may well hang in the balance.

Was it a positive step forward that the international community could come together and agree to meaningful action to combat climate change on a global scale by finally getting to implement the Paris Agreement? Yes, it was.

Having said that, this agreement is not perfect, they know it, and we know it. No one is pretending that it is. It falls well short of the steps that the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, the IPCC, determined just 1 month ago are needed to avoid the most catastrophic effects of climate change over the next decade.

The entire world needs to do even more to address this problem. That includes setting much more aggressive emissions reduction targets going forward to address the challenges of climate change in the years ahead. While we certainly can and should be doing more, though, this agreement is cause for hope that bolder future agreements are achievable, but reaching bolder future agreements is going to require real leadership from leaders and from nations across the world. After all, leadership is the biggest key to success for almost any organization or endeavor, and that includes saving this planet.

Unfortunately, our President, along with many in his administration, continue to reject climate science and deny the reality and the magnitude of the challenges we are facing. Well, here is the reality.

According to NOAA, the United States experienced 16 extreme weather-related disasters in 2017 that exceeded \$1 billion apiece. In the past year alone, Americans paid \$306 billion in damages due to storm surges, flooding, wildfires, crop freezes, and droughts—a new record.

Thirteen of our Nation's leading scientific Federal agencies recently reported to us in a National Climate Assessment that if we do nothing to address our climate emissions, today's extreme weather-related events will pale in comparison to what lies ahead.

Here is a sampling of what we can look forward to if we do nothing—if we don't do enough. In the future, we can continue to expect rainfall or precipitation as measured by the foot, not by