

the Ethiopian government halted all foreign adoption processing.

As countries like Russia and Ethiopia change intercountry adoption processes, or ban adoptions to the United States altogether, families must have up-to-date information regarding policies that could make the adoption process difficult, or even impossible. No family members should be left in the dark, oceans away from each other, wondering if they'll ever be united.

Under the Intercountry Adoption Act of 2000, the State Department is required to provide an annual, public report on intercountry adoptions. H.R. 1952 is simple. It would ensure that this report also includes information on policies that may prevent or prohibit adoptions to the United States.

This information would help families navigate the adoption process successfully. I'm proud to lead this effort with Congressman COLLINS, and I urge my colleagues to support it.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Texas (Mr. CASTRO) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 1952, as amended.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds being in the affirmative, the ayes have it.

Mr. CASTRO of Texas. Madam Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, further proceedings on this motion will be postponed.

#### GLOBAL ELECTORAL EXCHANGE ACT OF 2019

Mr. CASTRO of Texas. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 753) to promote international exchanges on best election practices, cultivate more secure democratic institutions around the world, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 753

*Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

#### SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "Global Electoral Exchange Act of 2019".

#### SEC. 2. SENSE OF CONGRESS.

It is the sense of Congress that—

(1) recent elections globally have illustrated the urgent need for the promotion and exchange of international best election practices, particularly in the areas of cybersecurity, results transmission, transparency of electoral data, election dispute resolution, and the elimination of discriminatory registration practices and other electoral irregularities;

(2) the advancement of democracy worldwide promotes American interests, as stable democracies provide new market opportunities, improve global health outcomes, and promote economic freedom and regional security;

(3) credible elections are the cornerstone of a healthy democracy and enable all persons

to exercise their basic human right to have a say in how they are governed;

(4) inclusive elections strengthen the credibility and stability of democracies more broadly;

(5) at the heart of a strong election cycle is the professionalism of the election management body and an empowered civil society;

(6) the development of local expertise via peer-to-peer learning and exchanges promotes the independence of such bodies from internal and external influence; and

(7) supporting the efforts of peoples in democratizing societies to build more representative governments in their respective countries is in the national interest of the United States.

#### SEC. 3. GLOBAL ELECTORAL EXCHANGE.

(a) GLOBAL ELECTORAL EXCHANGE.—The Secretary of State is authorized to establish and administer a Global Electoral Exchange Program to promote the utilization of sound election administration practices around the world.

(b) PURPOSE.—The purpose of the Global Electoral Exchange Program described in subsection (a) shall include the promotion and exchange of international best election practices, including in the areas of—

- (1) cybersecurity;
- (2) results transmission;
- (3) transparency of electoral data;
- (4) election dispute resolution;
- (5) the elimination of discriminatory registration practices and electoral irregularities;

(6) equitable access to polling places, voter education information, and voting mechanisms (including by persons with disabilities); and

(7) other sound election administration practices.

#### (c) EXCHANGE OF ELECTORAL AUTHORITIES.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of State may, in consultation, as appropriate, with the United States Agency for International Development, make grants to any United States-based organization described in section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 and exempt from tax under section 501(a) of such Code with experience in and a primary focus on foreign comparative election systems or subject matter expertise in the administration or integrity of such systems that submits an application in such form, and satisfying such requirements, as the Secretary may require.

(2) TYPES OF GRANTS.—An organization described in paragraph (1) may receive a grant for one or more of the following purposes:

(A) To design and implement programs bringing election administrators and officials, including government officials, poll workers, civil society representatives, members of the judiciary, and others who participate in the organization and administration of public elections in a foreign country that faces challenges to its electoral process to the United States to study election procedures in the United States for educational purposes.

(B) To design and implement programs taking the United States or another country's election administrators and officials, including government officials, poll workers, civil society representatives, members of the judiciary, and others who participate in the organization and administration of public elections to study and discuss election procedures for educational purposes.

(3) LIMITS ON ACTIVITIES.—Activities administered under the Global Electoral Exchange Program may not—

(A) include observation of an election for the purposes of assessing the validity or legitimacy of that election;

(B) facilitate any advocacy for a certain electoral result by a grantee when participating in the Program; or

(C) be carried out without proper consultation with State and local authorities in the United States that administer elections.

(4) SENSE OF CONGRESS.—It is the sense of Congress that the Secretary of State should establish and maintain a network of Global Electoral Exchange Program alumni, to promote communication and further exchange of information regarding sound election administration practices among current and former program participants.

(5) FURTHER LIMITS.—A recipient of a grant under the Global Electoral Exchange Program may use such grant for only the purpose for which such grant was awarded, unless otherwise authorized by the Secretary of State.

(6) NOT DUPLICATIVE.—Grants made under this subsection may not be duplicative of any other grants made under any other provision of law for similar or related purposes.

#### SEC. 4. CONGRESSIONAL OVERSIGHT.

Not later than one year after the date of the enactment of this Act and in each of the following two years thereafter, the Secretary of State shall provide to the Committee on Foreign Affairs of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Foreign Relations of the Senate a briefing on the status of any activities carried out pursuant to this Act during the preceding year, which shall include, among other information, the following:

(1) A summary of all exchanges conducted under the Global Electoral Exchange Program, including information regarding grantees, participants, and the locations where program activities were held.

(2) A description of the criteria used to select grantees under the Global Electoral Exchange Program.

(3) Any recommendations for the improvement of the Global Electoral Exchange Program, based on the purpose specified in section 3(b).

#### SEC. 5. NO ADDITIONAL FUNDS AUTHORIZED.

No additional funds are authorized to be appropriated to carry out the requirements of this Act. Such requirements shall be carried out using amounts otherwise authorized to be appropriated.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. CASTRO) and the gentleman from Texas (Mr. WRIGHT) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas (Mr. CASTRO).

#### GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. CASTRO of Texas. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on H.R. 753.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Texas?

There was no objection.

Mr. CASTRO of Texas. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Madam Speaker, I rise in strong support of H.R. 753, the Global Electoral Exchange Act of 2019. I would first like to thank my colleague Representative MARK MEADOWS for his important work on this measure that he and I introduced.

We passed this bill last Congress, and I urge my colleagues to do the same

this Congress. This time, I hope that the Senate acts on this small but important measure that will promote best practices in election administration worldwide.

This bill authorizes the Secretary of State to establish an exchange program for election officials like poll workers, judges, ballot designers, and civil society to promote best practices in election administration around the world.

We would send U.S.-based election administrators and officials abroad or bring foreign administrators and officials to the United States in order to train and exchange best practices when it comes to election administration.

This bill is a good idea and is needed now more than ever. Election irregularities, voter fraud, election manipulation, discriminatory registration, access to polls, intimidation and harassment while voting, and violence at polling stations are problems that have plagued countries around the world. This bill brings people together to tackle some of these problems and to ensure that best practices are promoted worldwide.

Credible, transparent, and peaceful elections are the cornerstones of a stable and robust democracy. This bill furthers that principle.

Madam Speaker, I strongly support the passage of H.R. 753, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. WRIGHT. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Madam Speaker, I rise today in support of the Global Electoral Exchange Act authored by my friend and fellow Texan, Mr. CASTRO.

Authoritarian regimes are a threat to personal liberty, international security, and economic progress all around the world. Countries like China, Russia, North Korea, Iran, and Venezuela present major roadblocks to global peace and prosperity, but there is nothing that dictators fear more than free markets and free people. This is why tyrants use repressive tactics to stifle dissent and crack down on public protests.

The world is a safer, more prosperous place when individuals are governed as citizens, not subjects. This is why promoting democracy abroad has always been a bipartisan cause.

The United States must maintain its leadership in keeping the flame of freedom burning. This legislation gives us another opportunity to be that leader.

The Global Electoral Exchange Act would facilitate the international exchange of election monitors, poll workers, and civil society leaders who participate in the administration of elections. By promoting best practices and empowering foreign societies to conduct elections that truly recognize the will of the people, these exchanges will strengthen democratic institutions in other countries.

Let's pass this bill and demonstrate that America remains a beacon of hope

and freedom to the world by empowering free and fair elections.

Madam Speaker, I do want to thank my colleague from Texas (Mr. CASTRO) and the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. MEADOWS) for their hard work on this bill. Friends of democracy have an interest in free and fair elections that are credible and protected from manipulation. This bill promotes that and deserves our unanimous support.

I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. CASTRO of Texas. Madam Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this measure. Once again, I thank my colleague MARK MEADOWS from North Carolina for his support and hard work on this bill.

The exchanges under this bill would be administered by the State Department and by USAID and would promote best practices and strengthen electoral institutions around the world.

I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Texas (Mr. CASTRO) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 753.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

□ 1645

#### DENOUNCING FEMALE GENITAL MUTILATION/CUTTING AS VIOLATING HUMAN RIGHTS OF WOMEN AND GIRLS

Mr. CASTRO of Texas. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 106) denouncing female genital mutilation/cutting as a violation of the human rights of women and girls and urging the international community and the Federal Government to increase efforts to eliminate the harmful practice.

The Clerk read the title of the resolution.

The text of the resolution is as follows:

##### H. RES. 106

Whereas female genital mutilation/cutting (FGM/C) is recognized internationally as a violation of the human rights of women and girls;

Whereas FGM/C comprises all procedures that involve partial or total removal of the external female genitalia, or other injury to the female genital organs for nonmedical reasons;

Whereas an estimated 200 million girls and women alive today have been victims of FGM/C, with girls 14 and younger representing 44 million of those who have been cut;

Whereas more than 3 million girls are estimated to be at risk of FGM/C annually;

Whereas the practice is mostly carried out on young girls between infancy and age 15;

Whereas the practice is rooted in gender inequality and is often linked to other elements of gender-based violence and discrimination, such as child marriage;

Whereas the World Health Organization asserts that FGM/C has no health benefits for women and girls, and can have long-term impacts on their physical, psychological, sexual, and reproductive health;

Whereas the impacts of FGM/C on the physical health of women and girls can include bleeding, infection, obstetric fistula, complications during childbirth, and death;

Whereas, according to UNICEF, FGM/C is reported to occur in all parts of the world, but is most prevalent in parts of Africa, the Middle East, and Asia;

Whereas, although the practice of FGM/C is highly concentrated in specific regions and associated with several cultural traditions, it is not tied to any one religion;

Whereas, in 2016, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention published a report estimating that 513,000 women and girls in the United States were at risk or may have been subjected to FGM/C;

Whereas, in 2015, the United Nations adopted a set of 17 Sustainable Development Goals for 2030 that includes a target to eliminate FGM/C, having previously recognized in 2010 that “the abandonment of this harmful practice can be achieved as a result of a comprehensive movement that involves all public and private stakeholders in society”;

Whereas the elimination of FGM/C has been called for by numerous intergovernmental organizations, including the African Union, the European Union, and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, as well as in 3 resolutions of the United Nations General Assembly;

Whereas the Department of State reports on FGM/C in its Annual Country Reports on Human Rights Practices, including information on whether FGM/C is prevalent, the type and category of genital cutting that is most common, as well as international and governmental efforts being taken to address the practice;

Whereas the Federal Government recognized FGM/C as a form of gender-based violence in the United States Strategy to Prevent and Respond to Gender-Based Violence Globally, released in August 2012 and updated in June 2016, and the United States Global Strategy to Empower Adolescent Girls, released in March 2016;

Whereas a Government Accountability Office report released in 2016 concluded that “State and USAID currently have limited international assistance efforts to address FGM/C.”; and

Whereas, in 2012, the United Nations General Assembly designated February 6 as the International Day of Zero Tolerance for Female Genital Mutilation to enhance awareness of and encourage concrete actions by states and individuals against the practice: Now, therefore, be it

*Resolved*, That the House of Representatives—

(1) denounces female genital mutilation/cutting as a violation of the human rights of women and girls;

(2) affirms the importance of ending the practice of female genital mutilation/cutting globally for the safety and security of women;

(3) calls upon the international community to increase efforts to accelerate the elimination of female genital mutilation/cutting; and

(4) urges the Department of State and the United States Agency for International Development in their gender programming to incorporate coordinated efforts to eliminate female genital mutilation/cutting.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. CASTRO) and the gentleman