

118TH CONGRESS  
1ST SESSION

# H. R. 6054

To ensure that the United States diplomatic workforce at all levels reflects the diverse composition of the United States, and for other purposes.

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## IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

OCTOBER 25, 2023

Ms. KAMLAGER-DOVE (for herself, Mr. LIEU, Mr. TORRES of New York, Mr. CASTRO of Texas, Mr. KIM of New Jersey, Mr. CONNOLLY, Ms. TITUS, Ms. OMAR, Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia, Mr. COHEN, Mr. KHANNA, Ms. LEE of California, Mr. VARGAS, Mr. VEASEY, Ms. KELLY of Illinois, Mr. TAKANO, Ms. NORTON, Ms. ADAMS, Mr. POCAN, Mr. SCHIFF, Ms. BROWNLEY, Mr. BLUMENAUER, Mr. TRONE, and Ms. JAYAPAL) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Affairs

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## A BILL

To ensure that the United States diplomatic workforce at all levels reflects the diverse composition of the United States, 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 “Represent America  
5 Abroad Act of 2023”.

6 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

7 Congress finds the following:

1           (1) The Department of State and the United  
2 States Agency for International Development  
3 (USAID) must continue to invest in policies to re-  
4 cruit, retain, and develop the best and brightest  
5 from the full spectrum of American society in order  
6 to be better positioned to advance United States in-  
7 terests abroad.

8           (2) Foreign Service officers are America's face  
9 to the world and in order to effectively advance  
10 American values on the world stage should represent  
11 the United States commitment to inclusion and di-  
12 versity.

13           (3) The Department of State and USAID must  
14 embrace policies that recruit professionals from the  
15 broadest possible pool of talent and retain them in  
16 order to have a Foreign Service that is the most ef-  
17 fective and truly reflects the diversity of the United  
18 States.

19           (4) February and June 2020 reports by the  
20 Government Accountability Office found barriers to  
21 a diverse and inclusive workforce within the ranks of  
22 the Foreign Service, especially at the mid-career and  
23 senior levels. Individuals who are racial or ethnic mi-  
24 norities comprise only 24 percent at the Department  
25 of State and 27 percent at USAID. At the executive

1 level, individuals who are racial or ethnic minorities  
2 comprise only 13 percent at the Department of  
3 State and 17 percent at USAID. This means that  
4 the leadership is the least diverse level within the  
5 Foreign Service.

6 (5) In the past, Secretaries of State have ac-  
7 knowledged the lack of workforce diversity and  
8 pledged to take concrete steps to address the prob-  
9 lem. In 2017, then-Secretary of State Rex Tillerson  
10 recognized a great diversity gap in the Department  
11 of State and former Secretary of State John Kerry  
12 noted that in order to represent the United States,  
13 the Department of State must have a workforce that  
14 reflects the rich composition of its citizenry. Yet  
15 there has been no concrete plan to address the lack  
16 of diversity at the mid-career and senior levels.

17 (6) USAID has previously identified under-rep-  
18 resentation of specific groups in its workforce, but  
19 staffing gaps, partly due to a lack of senior leader-  
20 ship attention, prevent the agency from adequately  
21 addressing the issue.

22 **SEC. 3. DECLARATION OF NATIONAL INTEREST; STATE-**  
23 **MENT OF POLICY.**

24 (a) DECLARATION OF NATIONAL INTEREST.—Con-  
25 gress declares that it is in the national interest of the

1 United States to ensure that the members of the United  
2 States Foreign Service workforce be representative of the  
3 American people.

4 (b) STATEMENT OF POLICY.—It shall be the policy  
5 of the Department of State and of the United States  
6 Agency for International Development—

7 (1) to strengthen the Foreign Service workforce  
8 by bolstering the diversity of those who represent  
9 Americans abroad;

10 (2) to treat the people of the Foreign Service  
11 as its primary asset, and as such, hold as a central  
12 tenet making strides in increasing representation at  
13 all levels of the Foreign Service workforce to secure  
14 the country’s national interests; and

15 (3) in accordance with the Foreign Service Act  
16 of 1980, to attract highly qualified, mid-career pro-  
17 fessionals who belong to historically excluded groups,  
18 through a pathway program for entry into the For-  
19 eign Service.

20 **SEC. 4. MODIFICATION OF LATERAL ENTRY FOREIGN SERV-**  
21 **ICE PROGRAM.**

22 (a) MODIFICATION OF LATERAL ENTRY FOREIGN  
23 SERVICE PROGRAM.—Section 404 of the Department of  
24 State Authorities Act, Fiscal Year 2017 (Public Law 114–  
25 323; 130 Stat. 1928) is amended to read as follows:

1 **“SEC. 404. LATERAL ENTRY INTO THE FOREIGN SERVICE.**

2 “(a) SENSE OF CONGRESS.—It is the sense of Con-  
3 gress that—

4 “(1) the Foreign Service should permit mid-ca-  
5 reer entry into the Foreign Service for qualified indi-  
6 viduals who are willing to bring their talents and ex-  
7 periences to the work of the Foreign Service; and

8 “(2) the lateral entry program authorized under  
9 this section should be used to address disparities in  
10 retention and promotion as identified by barrier  
11 analysis and 2020 Government Accountability Office  
12 reports, by identifying, attracting, and welcoming  
13 into the Foreign Service highly qualified mid-career  
14 professionals who belong to historically excluded  
15 groups in terms of racial, ethnic, geographic, and  
16 gender diversity, and disability status.

17 “(b) ESTABLISHMENT OF PROGRAM.—The Secretary  
18 shall establish a pilot program for lateral entry into the  
19 Foreign Service by mid-career professionals who belong to  
20 historically excluded groups in terms of racial, ethnic, geo-  
21 graphic, and gender diversity, and disability status that—

22 “(1) is in full comportment with current For-  
23 eign Service intake procedures, including the re-  
24 quirement to pass the Foreign Service exam;

1           “(2) requires only one directed assignment in a  
2           position appropriate to the grade level of the partici-  
3           pant;

4           “(3) includes, as part of the required initial  
5           training, a class or module that specifically prepares  
6           participants in the pilot program for life in the For-  
7           eign Service, including conveying to such partici-  
8           pants essential elements of the practical knowledge  
9           that is normally acquired during a Foreign Service  
10          officer’s initial assignments;

11          “(4) includes an annual assessment of the  
12          progress of the pilot program by a review board con-  
13          sisting of Department officials with appropriate ex-  
14          pertise, including employees of the Foreign Service,  
15          in order to evaluate the success of the pilot program;  
16          and

17          “(5) includes recruitment outreach for pilot  
18          program participation to—

19                  “(A) diversity officers in the private sector;

20                  “(B) all members of the civil service of the  
21                  Department and recognized Department affini-  
22                  ty groups;

23                  “(C) the civil service of other national se-  
24                  curity related Federal agencies; and

25                  “(D) professional associations.

1       “(c) ADMINISTRATION.—The pilot program under  
2 subsection (b) shall be administered jointly by the Director  
3 General of the Foreign Service, the Director of Global Tal-  
4 ent Management of the Department of State, and the  
5 Chief Human Capital Officer of the Office of Human Cap-  
6 ital and Talent Management of the United States Agency  
7 for International Development.

8       “(d) ELEMENTS.—

9               “(1) PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS.—The Sec-  
10 retary shall carry out the following with respect to  
11 the pilot program under subsection (b):

12                       “(A) Establish and publish eligibility cri-  
13 teria for candidates to participate in the pilot  
14 program.

15                       “(B) Carry out countrywide recruitment  
16 efforts to attract highly qualified, mid-career  
17 professionals from among historically excluded  
18 groups, such as at and through the following:

19                               “(i) Community agencies and organi-  
20 zations.

21                               “(ii) Faith-based organizations.

22                               “(iii) Community events.

23                               “(iv) Professional associations.

24                               “(v) Colleges and universities, includ-  
25 ing historically Black colleges and univer-

1           sities and other minority-serving institu-  
2           tions such as Hispanic-serving institutions,  
3           Asian American and Native American Pa-  
4           cific Islander-serving institutions, Amer-  
5           ican Indian Tribally controlled colleges and  
6           universities, Alaska Native and Native Ha-  
7           waiian-serving institutions, Tribal colleges  
8           and universities, Predominantly Black In-  
9           stitutions, and Native American-serving,  
10          Nontribal institutions.

11           “(vi) Diplomats in residence.

12           “(vii) Job fairs.

13           “(viii) Newspaper/magazines/journals.

14           “(ix) Radio stations and programs.

15           “(x) Websites, webcasts, podcasts, and  
16          other online channels.

17           “(C) Include appropriate mentorship and  
18          other career development opportunities, such as  
19          leadership training, for participants in the pilot  
20          program.

21           “(2) OVERALL QUALIFICATIONS.—In estab-  
22          lishing eligibility criteria under paragraph (1)(A),  
23          the Secretary shall seek highly qualified individuals  
24          who are mid-career professionals from the civil serv-



1 ice and private sector belonging to historically ex-  
2 cluded groups—

3 “(A) with diverse work experience, who  
4 have capabilities, insights, techniques, and expe-  
5 riences that would serve to enrich the Foreign  
6 Service workforce and empower it to perform  
7 more effectively;

8 “(B) with demonstrated knowledge of, ex-  
9 perience with, and interest in United States for-  
10 eign policy and national security and inter-  
11 national affairs, including knowledge of the af-  
12 fairs, cultures, and languages of other coun-  
13 tries;

14 “(C) with demonstrable leadership skills  
15 and the potential for further growth;

16 “(D) that demonstrate a track record of  
17 collaboration, team-building, and stakeholder  
18 management skills;

19 “(E) with demonstrated capacity for crit-  
20 ical thinking and analytical skills, including the  
21 ability to synthesize information into clear and  
22 concise recommendations;

23 “(F) with strategic thinking, and ability to  
24 solve complex problems;

1           “(G) with flexibility, adaptability, and de-  
2           termination; and

3           “(H) who are United States citizens with  
4           worldwide service availability and who are able  
5           to obtain appropriate security and medical  
6           clearances.

7           “(e) **ADVANCEMENT FROM PROGRAM.**—Candidates  
8           who are accepted into the pilot program under subsection  
9           (b) in accordance with the qualifications and requirements  
10          of this section shall have the opportunity to advance to  
11          the Foreign Service oral assessment for potential entry as  
12          the appropriate class of mid-level Foreign Service officer  
13          in accordance with the candidate’s professional qualifica-  
14          tions with a goal of not less than 50 percent of such par-  
15          ticipants per year being so placed.

16          “(f) **ANNUAL REPORTING.**—Not later than 1 year  
17          after the date of the enactment of the Represent America  
18          Abroad Act of 2023, and annually thereafter, the Sec-  
19          retary shall submit to the appropriate congressional com-  
20          mittees a report on the status of the pilot program under  
21          subsection (b). Each such report shall include the fol-  
22          lowing information with respect to the previous year:

23                  “(1) The number of accepted and unaccepted  
24                  applicants to the pilot program, and the number of  
25                  accepted applicants who began participating in the

1 pilot program, and the number of accepted appli-  
2 cants who began participating in the pilot program.

3 “(2) Anonymized information on the back-  
4 grounds of accepted pilot program applicants and  
5 participants with respect to education and prior  
6 work experience, ethnicity, and sex.

7 “(3) The number of pilot program participants  
8 who have advanced from the pilot program to a  
9 placement in the Foreign Service, disaggregated by  
10 education, prior work experience, ethnicity and sex.

11 “(4) A disaggregation by Foreign Service as-  
12 signment, cone and post or mission (including identi-  
13 fying whether the post is hard-to-fill) assigned to  
14 each pilot program participant who has advanced to  
15 a placement in the Foreign Service.

16 “(5) The grade level at which each pilot pro-  
17 gram participant who has advanced to a placement  
18 in the Foreign Service entered the Foreign Service.

19 “(6) The structure and operation of the pilot  
20 program.

21 “(7) Attrition rates and retention data with re-  
22 spect to the pilot program, including information on  
23 how such data compares to the data reported in the  
24 most recent prior submission of such report.

1           “(8) Information on recruiting efforts for the  
2 pilot program, including the resources allocated to  
3 outreach, as well as where, how, and when outreach  
4 will be carried out.

5           “(9) Information on efforts to improve the effi-  
6 cacy of the pilot program and promote retention of  
7 program participants.

8           “(g) LONGITUDINAL DATA.—The Secretary shall—

9           “(1) collect and maintain data on the career  
10 progression of each program participant for the  
11 length of each participant’s Foreign Service career;  
12 and

13           “(2) make the data described in paragraph (1)  
14 available to the appropriate congressional commit-  
15 tees upon request.

16           “(h) DURATION.—The pilot program under sub-  
17 section (b) shall be for an initial duration of 3 years, but  
18 may be renewed for an additional 5-year period following  
19 the end of such initial duration.

20           “(i) MID-CAREER PROFESSIONAL DEFINED.—In this  
21 section, the term ‘mid-career professional’ means an indi-  
22 vidual who has the skills and experience to serve as a mid-  
23 level Foreign Service officer (class 3, 2, or 1) and who  
24 meets any of the following criteria, consistent with the  
25 merit-based principles and core precepts set forth in the

1 Foreign Affairs Manual and Handbook and in accordance  
2 with applicable requirements of the Foreign Service Act  
3 of 1980:

4           “(1) An individual with at least 8 years of pro-  
5 fessional experience and a bachelor’s degree from an  
6 accredited college or university in selected fields of  
7 study representing the needs of the Department of  
8 State, including public policy, public administration,  
9 international law, international relations, political  
10 science, foreign languages, business administration,  
11 economics, history, sociology, geography, social or  
12 cultural anthropology, statistics, or the humanities.

13           “(2) An individual with at least 7 years of pro-  
14 fessional experience and a master’s degree from an  
15 accredited college or university in selected fields of  
16 study representing the needs of the Department of  
17 State, including any field specified in paragraph (1).

18           “(3) An individual with at least 5 years of pro-  
19 fessional experience and doctoral degree from an ac-  
20 credited college or university in selected fields of  
21 study representing the needs of the Department of  
22 State, including any field specified in paragraph  
23 (1).”.

24           (b) TIMING.—Not later than 90 days after the date  
25 of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of State shall

1 commence the implementation of the pilot program under  
2 section 404(b) of the Department of State Authorities Act,  
3 Fiscal Year 2017 (Public Law 114–323; 130 Stat. 1928),  
4 as amended by subsection (a).

○