

118TH CONGRESS  
1ST SESSION

# H. RES. 209

Expressing the sense of the House of Representatives regarding the importance of taking a feminist approach to all aspects of foreign policy, including foreign assistance and humanitarian response, trade, diplomacy, defense, immigration, funding, and accountability mechanisms.

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## IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

MARCH 8, 2023

Ms. LOIS FRANKEL of Florida (for herself, Ms. LEE of California, Ms. KAMLAGER-DOVE, Ms. BARRAGÁN, Ms. BONAMICI, Mr. BOWMAN, Mr. CÁRDENAS, Mr. CASTRO of Texas, Mrs. CHERFILUS-McCORMICK, Ms. CHU, Mr. CICILLINE, Ms. CLARKE of New York, Ms. CROCKETT, Ms. DEAN of Pennsylvania, Ms. ESHOO, Mr. GARCÍA of Illinois, Mr. GRIJALVA, Ms. JACKSON LEE, Ms. JAYAPAL, Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia, Mr. KEATING, Mr. KHANNA, Ms. KUSTER, Ms. MCCOLLUM, Mr. MCGOVERN, Ms. MENG, Mr. NADLER, Ms. NORTON, Ms. OMAR, Ms. PORTER, Ms. PRESSLEY, Ms. SÁNCHEZ, Ms. SCHAKOWSKY, Mr. SHERMAN, Ms. STEVENS, Ms. TITUS, Ms. TLAIB, Ms. TOKUDA, Mrs. TORRES of California, Mr. VARGAS, Ms. VELÁZQUEZ, Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ, Mrs. WATSON COLEMAN, and Ms. WILLIAMS of Georgia) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Affairs

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## RESOLUTION

Expressing the sense of the House of Representatives regarding the importance of taking a feminist approach to all aspects of foreign policy, including foreign assistance and humanitarian response, trade, diplomacy, defense, immigration, funding, and accountability mechanisms.

Whereas a feminist approach to public policy requires meaningful analysis of and proactive challenges to power

structures and inequalities based on intersecting systems of discrimination, including discrimination on the basis of race, age, language, socioeconomic status, physical or mental ability, sex, including gender identity or expression and sexual orientation, indigenous identity, religion, ethnicity, citizenship, and nationality or migrant status;

Whereas foreign policy reflects how a government defines and prioritizes peace and security, structures international trade, provides humanitarian aid and development assistance, and works with other nations and non-state actors;

Whereas feminist foreign policy is the policy of a State that defines its interactions with other States, as well as movements and other non-state actors, in a manner that—

(1) prioritizes peace, gender equality, and environmental integrity;

(2) enshrines, promotes, and protects the human rights of all;

(3) seeks to disrupt colonial, racist, patriarchal, and male-dominated power structures; and

(4) allocates significant resources, including research, to achieve that vision;

Whereas feminist foreign policy is coherent in its approach across its levers of influence, anchored by the exercise of those values at home and cocreated with feminist organizations, movements, and stakeholders, at home and abroad;

Whereas women’s rights are human rights and foreign policy in the United States should be representative, inclusive, responsive, and accountable to stakeholders, and should take an intersectional approach, utilizing a power-based

analysis that reveals, acknowledges, and seeks to correct for inequalities;

Whereas feminist foreign policy includes a focus on key thematic priorities of bodily autonomy, peace, environmental integrity, and justice, which are often left behind in foreign policy development and discourse;

Whereas, although women and girls make up approximately half of the world's population, they face considerable disparities relative to men and boys in their access to rights, resources, and agency around the world, and—

(1) as of 2022, women had on average three-quarters of the legal rights as men worldwide;

(2) the World Economic Forum's Global Gender Gap report for 2022 estimates that at the current rate of change, it will take 132 years for there to be gender parity across the four dimensions it examines: health and survival, economic participation and opportunity, educational attainment, and political empowerment;

(3) there are 1,800,000,000 young people in the world and approximately half of them, 900,000,000, are adolescent girls and young women;

(4) as early as age 6, girls' levels of ambition and self-confidence in their abilities are impacted by gender discrimination and harmful stereotypes, and girls aged 12 to 17 are more at risk of dropping out of school than boys around the world;

(5) in 2022, around the world women held only 22.9 percent of parliamentary seats and 16.1 percent of ministerial positions;

(6) approximately one-third of women globally have experienced gender-based violence, which increases in settings of crisis, conflict, and humanitarian emergencies;

(7) in 2021, 81,000 women and girls were killed worldwide, 45,000 of them by an intimate partner or family member;

(8) in 2021, only 5.8 percent of military contingents and 14.4 percent of uniformed police units in United Nations peacekeeping missions were women;

(9) in low- and middle-income countries, 218,000,000 women want to delay or prevent pregnancy and have an unmet need for family planning services and supplies, which can lead to unintended pregnancies and health complications, and limit women's and girls' opportunities to pursue education, economic, and civic engagement;

(10) women face more constraints than men do in accessing foreign markets;

(11) immigration law itself tends to marginalize women, relying on outmoded models of family, migration patterns, and economic mobility that often fail to account for the reality of women's lives when migrating;

(12) women and girls face increased risks in crisis; and

(13) in the past decade, women provided over 43 percent of the agricultural labor in low- and middle-income countries, yet comprised more than 60 percent of the world's chronically hungry people;

Whereas in a world in which there is gender equality and women can fully participate in all spheres of life—

(1) global gross domestic product could increase by \$28,000,000,000,000 over 10 years;

(2) the percentage of hungry people could be reduced by 12 to 17 percent if women had equal access to agricultural resources; and

(3) peace agreements are 35 percent more likely to last over 15 years when women are at the negotiating table;

Whereas as foreign assistance by the United States helps tens of millions of people each year, often providing life-saving aid while accounting for approximately 1 percent of the United States Federal budget, a smaller amount supports gender equality, and—

(1) about 3 percent of assistance in 2020 was reported as specifically for gender equality programs;

(2) only about 19 percent of assistance in 2020 was reported as including key components to address gender equality issues within projects that have a primary focus other than gender equality across all sectors; and

(3) an even smaller amount of aid funding finds its way to local, women-led and feminist organizations and grassroots gender equality movements, and in 2020, the United States only disbursed \$1,000,000 to women's rights organizations and institutions, and as of 2021, in the past 10 years has not disbursed more than \$10,000,000 in a year;

Whereas a feminist foreign assistance policy in the United States would promote gender equality and focus on the experience of women and people who experience multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination, such as gender-based violence, lack of access to sexual and reproductive health, rights, and justice, lack of access to education, and the burden of unpaid care responsibilities;

Whereas the long-lasting impacts of the COVID–19 pandemic highlighted the need to take a feminist approach to foreign policy with many impacts disproportionately affecting women and girls, including—

(1) the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) finds that over 90 percent of students were affected by pandemic-related school closures, that approximately 1,500,000,000 students had their learning disrupted, and that approximately 11,000,000 girls were put at risk for permanently dropping out of school by the pandemic;

(2) the economic impact of the pandemic has had a disproportionate effect on women, and the 780,000,000 women who rely on informal employment lost on average 60 percent of their prepandemic income in the first month of the pandemic;

(3) on average, the ratio of women's employment to population dropped more than that of men due to the COVID-19 pandemic according to the International Labour Organization;

(4) UN Women, the United Nations Development Programme, and the University of Pardee Center for International Futures estimated that the COVID-19 pandemic put 388,000,000 women and girls at risk of falling into extreme poverty in 2022, compared to 372,000,000 men and boys, worsening the already existing gender-poverty gap;

(5) worldwide, women have shouldered the bulk of unpaid care and domestic work resulting from the pandemic, and even prior to the pandemic, women on average performed more than three times the amount of unpaid work relative to men;

(6) the COVID-19 pandemic disrupted efforts to end child marriage, and could result in an additional 13,000,000 child marriages taking place between 2020 and 2030 that would otherwise have been averted;

(7) nearly 12,000,000 women lost access to family planning services and 1,400,000 unintended pregnancies in low- and middle-income countries occurred in just the first year of the pandemic;

(8) an estimated 243,000,000 women worldwide were subjected to sexual or physical violence by an intimate partner between April 2019 and April 2020, and 45 percent of women have been exposed to at least one form of violence against women either directly or indirectly since the start of the pandemic; and

(9) due to the disruption of programs to prevent female genital mutilation in response to COVID–19, an additional 2,000,000 female genital mutilation cases will need to be averted to eradicate the practice by 2030;

Whereas, in mid-2022, over 100,000,000 people were displaced from their homes due to violence, disaster, conflict, and persecution, more than 339,000,000 people will be in need of humanitarian assistance in 2023, and tools and initiatives to center women, girls, and people of all gender identities in humanitarian responses, such as Safe from the Start and the Inter-Agency Standing Committee Gender Handbook for Humanitarian Action, should be used to respond;

Whereas trade is a necessary and vital component of a nation’s economic success and growth and a key part of its engagement with other nations, and—

(1) in 2022, United States exports and imports totaled approximately \$3,009,700,000,000 and \$3,957,800,000,000, respectively; and

(2) a feminist trade policy would promote women’s rights and equitable and dignified labor practices throughout the value chain, as well as reduce and miti-

gate the harmful impacts of climate change associated with trade;

Whereas feminist diplomacy fosters increased collaboration and cooperation among State and non-state actors, including championing equality and supporting the institutions and mechanisms that facilitate cooperation, non-military conflict resolution, and peaceful competition, and that mitigate the effects of climate change;

Whereas a total of 13 governments have implemented or announced an intention to implement feminist foreign policies and the G7 has recognized “feminist development, foreign and trade policies” and has committed to strengthen the rights, resources, and opportunities for women and girls in all their diversity in every sphere;

Whereas defense efforts support the goal of a more peaceful, equitable, and healthy planet, with peace as the ultimate aim of defense, and a military policy that prevents and responds to gender-based violence in conflict and that meaningfully includes women and those who face discrimination in security forces, peace negotiations, and postconflict rebuilding, in accordance with United States commitments to the Women, Peace, and Security Act of 2017 (P.L. 115–68) and its necessary implementation;

Whereas migration remains a global and growing phenomenon, and—

(1) the number of international migrants reached an estimated 281,000,000 persons in 2020;

(2) women constitute nearly half of global migrant flows;

(3) the United States is the leading country of destination, hosting 50,632,836 foreign-born people, includ-



ing over 613,700 naturalized citizens in fiscal year 2022;  
and

(4) a feminist approach to immigration would integrate an analysis of the impact of immigration policy on women, children, people of all gender identities, and indigenous people; and

Whereas strong transparency and accountability are critical to ensuring that promises to advance a feminist approach are honored through full funding and include the development of participatory approaches to policy formulation and implementation, the setting and reaching of specific, time-bound and measurable goals that do no harm and are desired by and beneficial to those impacted, and transparent reporting on the progress toward goals: Now, therefore, be it

1       *Resolved*, That the House of Representatives—

2               (1) supports the goals of a feminist foreign pol-  
3       icy;

4               (2) supports the adoption of policies that pro-  
5       mote gender equity and women and girls' participa-  
6       tion in public life, including women and girls' edu-  
7       cation, equitable access to health care, representa-  
8       tion in public office, economic security and oppor-  
9       tunity, access to rights and resources, inclusion in  
10      foreign markets, and participation in peacekeeping,  
11      military, and diplomatic missions;

12              (3) recognizes that a whole-of-government effort  
13      that ensures coherence of a feminist approach across

1 all streams of foreign policy is necessary to achieve  
2 those goals, and must include—

3 (A) high-level leadership with a mandate to  
4 design and implement a feminist foreign policy  
5 with clearly articulated objectives;

6 (B) commitment to gender parity, diver-  
7 sity, equity, and inclusion, both internally  
8 among leadership and staff and externally, co-  
9 created with civil society groups and other  
10 stakeholders outside of government;

11 (C) the adoption of a zero-tolerance policy  
12 on gender-based violence and workplace harass-  
13 ment, immediately eliminating policies that  
14 allow abusers to move from one post to another  
15 once accused without facing consequences re-  
16 lated to their employment or promotion;

17 (D) training and capacity-building to en-  
18 sure robust implementation;

19 (E) gender analysis underlying all aspects  
20 of foreign policy;

21 (F) adequate resourcing to ensure all of  
22 the above; and

23 (G) regular and public reporting on efforts  
24 and outcomes; and

1           (4) commits to work with civil society groups  
2           and other stakeholders inside and outside of govern-  
3           ment to advance a more feminist foreign policy in  
4           the United States.

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