

116TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

S. 4118

To require the President to appoint a Special Presidential Envoy for Pandemic Preparedness and Response, who shall develop and implement a diplomatic strategy to prepare for, detect, respond to, and recover from pandemics and other global outbreaks of infectious disease, and for other purposes.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

JUNE 30, 2020

Ms. HARRIS introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations

A BILL

To require the President to appoint a Special Presidential Envoy for Pandemic Preparedness and Response, who shall develop and implement a diplomatic strategy to prepare for, detect, respond to, and recover from pandemics and other global outbreaks of infectious disease, 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 “Improving Pandemic
5 Preparedness and Response Through Diplomacy Act”.

1 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

2 Congress finds the following:

3 (1) According to the annual report of the Glob-
4 al Preparedness Monitoring Board (an independent
5 panel of experts convened by the World Bank Group
6 and the World Health Organization), “The world is
7 at acute risk for devastating regional or global dis-
8 ease epidemics or pandemics that not only cause loss
9 of life but upend and create social chaos.”.

10 (2) The World Health Organization—

11 (A) declared the outbreak of the novel
12 coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID–19) a Public
13 Health Emergency of International Concern on
14 January 30, 2020;

15 (B) raised its global risk assessment to
16 “Very High” on February 28, 2020; and

17 (C) ultimately declared the outbreak a
18 pandemic on March 11, 2020.

19 (3) The risks associated with future outbreaks
20 of infectious disease and other global health emer-
21 gencies, whether naturally-occurring, accidental, or
22 deliberate, are increasing due to a number of fac-
23 tors, including—

24 (A) the spillover of pathogens from ani-
25 mals to humans;

1 (B) the development of antimicrobial re-
2 sistance;

3 (C) population growth and resulting
4 strains on the environment;

5 (D) urbanization;

6 (E) international travel and trade;

7 (F) forced and voluntary migration;

8 (G) climate change;

9 (H) weak public health infrastructures;

10 and

11 (I) potential acts of bioterrorism.

12 (4) Vulnerable populations, including those who
13 live in poverty and in countries with weak public
14 health and government infrastructure, and at-risk
15 groups, such as the sick, older people, ethnic and re-
16 ligious minorities, women, people with disabilities,
17 LGBTQ people, indigenous, migrants, refugees, and
18 children, are particularly susceptible to the outbreak
19 of infectious disease and its consequences.

20 (5) According to an April 2020 report of the
21 International Monetary Fund—

22 (A) “It is very likely that this year the
23 global economy will experience its worst reces-
24 sion since the Depression, surpassing that seen

1 during the global financial crisis a decade
2 ago.”; and

3 (B) “As a result of the pandemic, the glob-
4 al economy is projected to contract sharply by
5 3 percent in 2020.”.

6 (6) As of May 14, 2020, the Department of
7 Labor estimated that 36,500,000 workers filed for
8 first-time unemployment claims during the previous
9 8 weeks, which coincides with the timeframe during
10 which the impact of the coronavirus became wide-
11 spread across the United States.

12 (7) The United States Government, along with
13 the medical, scientific, and public health commu-
14 nities, has historically promoted global public health
15 through—

16 (A) multilateral cooperation;

17 (B) funding of relevant research activities;

18 and

19 (C) the provision of development assistance
20 to prepare for, detect, respond to, and recover
21 from the outbreak of infectious disease.

22 (8) The Global Health Security Agenda is a
23 multi-faceted, multi-country initiative intended to
24 improve partner countries’ measurable capabilities to

1 prevent, detect, and respond to infectious disease,
2 which the United States is committed to advancing.

3 **SEC. 3. SENSE OF CONGRESS.**

4 It is the sense of Congress that—

5 (1) no country, acting alone, can effectively pro-
6 tect the health and safety of all its people from the
7 outbreak and spread of infectious disease and other
8 global health emergencies;

9 (2) efforts to prepare for, detect, respond to,
10 and recover from disease outbreaks and pandemics
11 globally—

12 (A) are in the interests of the United
13 States; and

14 (B) are consistent with the promotion of
15 core values of peace, prosperity, health, and
16 equal dignity and rights of all peoples;

17 (3) robust diplomacy, including multilateral di-
18 plomacy and development assistance, is an essential
19 part of a well-coordinated, whole-of-government
20 strategy to prepare for, detect, respond to, and re-
21 cover from disease outbreak and spread and other
22 global health emergencies; and

23 (4) support for, and active participation in,
24 multilateral organizations, such as the United Na-
25 tions and the World Health Organization, enhance

1 the efforts of the United States to prepare for, de-
2 tect, respond to, and recover from disease outbreaks
3 and pandemics, both domestically and globally.

4 **SEC. 4. SPECIAL PRESIDENTIAL ENVOY FOR PANDEMIC**
5 **PREPAREDNESS AND RESPONSE.**

6 (a) **DEFINED TERM.**—In this section, the term “ap-
7 propriate congressional committees” means—

8 (1) the Committee on Foreign Relations of the
9 Senate;

10 (2) the Committee on Health, Education,
11 Labor, and Pensions of the Senate;

12 (3) the Committee on Homeland Security and
13 Governmental Affairs of the Senate;

14 (4) the Committee on Armed Services of the
15 Senate;

16 (5) the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition,
17 and Forestry of the Senate;

18 (6) the Committee on Commerce, Science, and
19 Transportation of the Senate;

20 (7) the Select Committee on Intelligence of the
21 Senate;

22 (8) the Committee on Foreign Affairs of the
23 House of Representatives;

24 (9) the Committee on Ways and Means of the
25 House of Representatives;

1 (10) the Committee on Energy and Commerce
2 of the House of Representatives;

3 (11) the Committee on Education and Labor of
4 the House of Representatives;

5 (12) the Committee on Homeland Security of
6 the House of Representatives;

7 (13) the Committee on Armed Services of the
8 House of Representatives;

9 (14) the Committee on Agriculture of the
10 House of Representatives; and

11 (15) the Permanent Select Committee on Intel-
12 ligence of the House of Representatives.

13 (b) OFFICE OF THE SPECIAL PRESIDENTIAL
14 ENVOY.—There is established in the Office of the Sec-
15 retary of State, an Office of the Special Presidential
16 Envoy, which—

17 (1) shall be led by the Special Presidential
18 Envoy for Pandemic Preparedness and Response
19 (referred to in this section as the “Special Presi-
20 dential Envoy”) appointed pursuant to subsection
21 (c);

22 (2) shall be staffed with—

23 (A) detailees from the bureaus and offices
24 under the jurisdiction of the Under Secretary

1 for Economic Growth, Energy, and the Envi-
2 ronment;

3 (B) detailees from the Bureau of Oceans
4 and International Environmental and Scientific
5 Affairs; and

6 (C) any other Department of State per-
7 sonnel the Secretary considers necessary.

8 (c) APPOINTMENT.—The President, in consultation
9 with the Secretary of State and the Secretary of Health
10 and Human Services, shall appoint a Special Presidential
11 Envoy for Pandemic Preparedness and Response, who
12 shall have the rank and status of Ambassador-at-Large.

13 (d) QUALIFICATIONS.—The Special Presidential
14 Envoy shall have extensive experience in global public
15 health, diplomacy, medicine, or a related field.

16 (e) DUTIES.—

17 (1) IN GENERAL.—The principal duty of the
18 Special Presidential Envoy shall be the overall su-
19 pervision, including policy oversight of resources, of
20 diplomatic efforts to prepare for, detect, respond to,
21 and recover from pandemics and other global out-
22 breaks of infectious disease. The Special Presidential
23 Envoy shall exercise such powers as the Secretary of
24 State may prescribe.

1 (2) STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT.—The Special
2 Presidential Envoy shall develop, and, in coordina-
3 tion with the heads of relevant departments and
4 agencies, direct the implementation of the diplomatic
5 strategy described in section 5.

6 (f) REPORTS.—

7 (1) REPORT ON COVID–19 PANDEMIC.—Not
8 later than 30 days after the date of the enactment
9 of this Act, and quarterly thereafter, the Special
10 Presidential Envoy shall submit a report to the ap-
11 propriate congressional committees that describes
12 his or her efforts to develop and implement a diplo-
13 matic strategy comprised of the elements specified in
14 section 5 with respect to the COVID–19 pandemic.

15 (2) GENERAL REPORT.—Not later than 90 days
16 after the date of the enactment of this Act, and
17 every 180 days thereafter, the Special Presidential
18 Envoy shall submit a report to the appropriate con-
19 gressional committees that describes his or her ef-
20 forts to develop and implement a diplomatic strategy
21 comprised of the elements specified in section 5 with
22 respect to any and all future outbreaks of infectious
23 disease or pandemics.

1 (g) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There is
2 authorized to be appropriated \$10,000,000 for the Office
3 of the Special Presidential Envoy to carry out this section.

4 **SEC. 5. ELEMENTS OF DIPLOMATIC STRATEGY.**

5 The diplomatic strategy to prepare for, detect, re-
6 spond to, and recover from pandemics and other global
7 outbreaks of infectious disease should address—

8 (1) the development of medical counter-
9 measures, including vaccines, antimicrobials, thera-
10 pautics, and diagnostics for emerging infectious dis-
11 eases;

12 (2) zoonotic disease prevention, detection, and
13 response;

14 (3) the development of disease surveillance sys-
15 tems;

16 (4) the promotion of disease reporting and
17 greater transparency of disease-related information;

18 (5) increasing the capabilities and capacity of
19 national laboratories;

20 (6) combating the spread of antimicrobial re-
21 sistant microorganisms;

22 (7) scientific workforce development and train-
23 ing;

24 (8) the mitigation of, disruptions to, and other
25 issues related to, global medical supply chains;

1 (9) efforts to prevent the outbreak and spread
2 of infectious diseases among displaced persons and
3 other vulnerable populations;

4 (10) the development and use of standards and
5 best practices for the imposition and lifting of dis-
6 ease mitigation measures, including travel restric-
7 tions, social distancing, quarantining, and other re-
8 strictions on economic and social activities; and

9 (11) efforts to combat the spread of
10 disinformation and racial discrimination related to
11 the outbreak and spread of infectious disease.

12 **SEC. 6. INTERAGENCY STEERING COMMITTEE.**

13 (a) **IN GENERAL.**—The Secretary of State, acting
14 through the Special Presidential Envoy for Pandemic Pre-
15 paredness and Response, shall regularly convene an inter-
16 agency steering committee to aid in the development, co-
17 ordination, and implementation of the diplomatic strategy
18 described in section 5.

19 (b) **MEMBERSHIP.**—The interagency steering com-
20 mittee referred to in subsection (a)—

21 (1) should be led by the Special Presidential
22 Envoy; and

23 (2) shall include, as members—

1 (A) the Assistant Secretary of State for
2 Oceans and International Environmental and
3 Scientific Affairs;

4 (B) the Global AIDS Coordinator and
5 United States Special Representative for Global
6 Health Diplomacy;

7 (C) any other Department of State per-
8 sonnel the Secretary considers necessary;

9 (D) the Director of the Office of Global
10 Affairs of the Department of Health and
11 Human Services; and

12 (E) at least 1 representative from each of
13 the following agencies:

14 (i) The United States Agency for
15 International Development.

16 (ii) The Department of Health and
17 Human Services.

18 (iii) The Centers for Disease Control
19 and Prevention.

20 (iv) The National Institutes of
21 Health.

22 (v) The Department of Agriculture.

23 (vi) The Department of Homeland Se-
24 curity.

25 (vii) The Department of the Treasury.

1 (viii) The Department of Commerce.

2 (ix) The Office of the United States
3 Trade Representative.

4 (x) The Department of Labor.

5 (xi) The White House Office of
6 Science and Technology Policy.

7 (xii) The Office of the Director of Na-
8 tional Intelligence.

9 (xiii) The Department of Defense.

10 **SEC. 7. OUTSIDE PANEL OF EXPERTS.**

11 (a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of State, acting
12 through the Special Presidential Envoy for Pandemic Pre-
13 paredness and Response, shall regularly convene an out-
14 side panel of experts—

15 (1) to advise the Special Presidential Envoy re-
16 garding scientific, technical, and other policy mat-
17 ters; and

18 (2) to make recommendations for the develop-
19 ment and implementation of the diplomatic strategy
20 described in section 5.

21 (b) COMPOSITION.—The Special Presidential Envoy,
22 in consultation with the interagency steering committee
23 established pursuant to section 6, shall determine who will
24 be included on the panel convened pursuant to subsection
25 (a).

1 (c) APPLICABILITY OF FACA.—The Federal Advi-
2 sory Committee Act (5 U.S.C. App. shall not apply to the
3 panel convened pursuant to subsection (a)).

4 **SEC. 8. HONORING FINANCIAL COMMITMENTS TO THE**
5 **WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION.**

6 Subject to the availability of appropriations, but not-
7 withstanding any other provision of law, the Secretary of
8 the Treasury shall remit all United States assessed con-
9 tributions to the World Health Organization not later than
10 the date on which such contributions are due and payable.

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