

112TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 3711

To require the President to call a White House Conference on Haiti.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

DECEMBER 16, 2011

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Affairs, and in addition to the Committee on Rules, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned

A BILL

To require the President to call a White House Conference on Haiti.

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 “White House Con-
5 ference on Haiti Act of 2011”.

6 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

7 Congress finds the following:

8 (1) Haiti is the poorest country in the Western
9 Hemisphere.

1 (2) On January 12, 2010, a 7.0 magnitude
2 earthquake struck the country of Haiti.

3 (3) The earthquake caused massive devastation
4 across Haiti, destroying government buildings, hos-
5 pitals, schools, and vital aid offices including the
6 headquarters of the United Nations mission to
7 Haiti.

8 (4) An estimated 3,000,000 people have been
9 directly affected by the disaster in Haiti, nearly one-
10 third of the country's population, who are currently
11 at risk of long-term displacement and vulnerability.

12 (5) Prior to the earthquake, Haiti was still in
13 the process of recovering from a recent series of hur-
14 ricanes and tropical storms, previous natural disas-
15 ters, and food shortages and rising commodity
16 prices, but was showing encouraging signs of im-
17 provement.

18 (6) On October 21, 2010, the Centers for Dis-
19 ease Control and Prevention confirmed an outbreak
20 of cholera in Haiti.

21 (7) As of May 29, 2011, there have been
22 321,066 cases of cholera and 5,337 deaths, and
23 500,000 total cases are expected by the end of the
24 year.

1 (8) President Obama vowed the “unwavering
2 support” of the United States and pledged a “swift,
3 coordinated and aggressive effort to save lives and
4 support the recovery in Haiti”.

5 (9) Prior to the earthquake, there were approxi-
6 mately 10,000 nongovernmental organizations oper-
7 ating in Haiti.

8 (10) At least 3,000,000 Haitians live abroad.

9 (11) Haitians abroad provide significant capital
10 to local economies in Haiti through travel and remit-
11 tances and have the potential to advance reconstruc-
12 tion efforts by providing needed skills and resources.

13 (12) The response to the tragedy from the glob-
14 al community has been overwhelmingly positive.

15 (13) Individuals, businesses, and philanthropic
16 organizations across the United States and through-
17 out the international community have responded in
18 support of Haiti during this time of crisis.

19 **SEC. 3. AUTHORIZATION OF THE CONFERENCE.**

20 (a) **AUTHORITY TO CALL CONFERENCE.**—Not later
21 than June 30, 2012, the President shall call the White
22 House Conference on Haiti (in this Act referred to as the
23 “Conference”) to be convened not later than 6 months
24 after the selection of the Policy Committee established in
25 section 4, in order to make fundamental policy rec-

1 ommendations on ways to assist in the recovery and long-
2 term development of Haiti.

3 (b) PLANNING AND DIRECTION.—The Secretary of
4 State and the Secretary of Homeland Security (in this Act
5 referred to as the “Co-chairs”) shall plan, conduct, and
6 convene the Conference, in consultation with other appro-
7 priate Cabinet members.

8 (c) PURPOSES OF CONFERENCE.—The purposes of
9 the Conference are to—

10 (1) bring attention to the ongoing challenges
11 facing Haiti and the progress made in its recovery
12 from the January 12, 2010, earthquake;

13 (2) promote collaboration and coordination be-
14 tween the United States Government, foreign gov-
15 ernments, the private sector, international non-
16 governmental organizations, and the Haitian Dias-
17 pora;

18 (3) identify gaps or duplication in the provision
19 of humanitarian assistance;

20 (4) highlight innovative ideas for sustainable re-
21 building and redevelopment in Haiti;

22 (5) share best practices in development assist-
23 ance in Haiti and in nations facing similar chal-
24 lenges;

1 (6) develop opportunities for greater involve-
2 ment in Haiti's recovery by the Haitian Diaspora
3 and the private sector;

4 (7) review the structure, scope, and effective-
5 ness of existing policies and initiatives by public and
6 private entities regarding development assistance,
7 stability, and long-term economic growth in Haiti;
8 and

9 (8) identify possible changes to United States
10 immigration, trade, and foreign aid policies that may
11 assist in a more rapid, sustainable recovery.

12 **SEC. 4. POLICY COMMITTEE; RELATED COMMITTEES.**

13 (a) ESTABLISHMENT.—Not later than July 31, 2012,
14 there is established a Policy Committee comprising of 17
15 members to be selected as follows:

16 (1) PRESIDENTIAL APPOINTEES.—Nine mem-
17 bers shall be selected by the President and shall in-
18 clude—

19 (A) 3 members who are officers or employ-
20 ees of the United States; and

21 (B) 6 members with experience in address-
22 ing the needs of disaster-stricken and devel-
23 oping countries.

24 (2) HOUSE APPOINTEES.—

1 (A) SELECTION BY SPEAKER.—Two mem-
2 bers shall be selected by the Speaker of the
3 House of Representatives after consultation
4 with the chairperson of the Committee on For-
5 eign Affairs, the chairperson of the Committee
6 on Homeland Security, the chairperson of the
7 Committee on the Judiciary, the chairperson of
8 the Committee on Energy and Commerce, and
9 the chairperson of the Committee on Financial
10 Services, of the House of Representatives.

11 (B) SELECTION BY MINORITY LEADER.—
12 Two members shall be selected by the minority
13 leader of the House of Representatives, after
14 consultation with the ranking minority members
15 of such committees.

16 (3) SENATE APPOINTEES.—

17 (A) SELECTION BY MAJORITY LEADER.—
18 Two members shall be selected by the majority
19 leader of the Senate, after consultation with
20 members of the Committee on Foreign Rela-
21 tions, the Committee on Homeland Security
22 and Governmental Affairs, the Committee on
23 Commerce, Science, and Transportation, and
24 the Committee on Finance, of the Senate.

1 (B) SELECTION BY MINORITY LEADER.—

2 Two members shall be selected by the minority
3 leader of the Senate, after consultation with
4 members of such committees.

5 (b) VOTING; CHAIRPERSON.—

6 (1) VOTING.—The Policy Committee shall act
7 by the vote of a majority of the members present.
8 A quorum of Committee members shall not be re-
9 quired to conduct Committee business.

10 (2) CHAIRPERSON.—The Under Secretary of
11 State for Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs shall
12 serve as the chairperson of the Policy Committee.
13 The chairperson may vote only to break a tie vote
14 of the other members of the Policy Committee.

15 (c) DUTIES OF THE POLICY COMMITTEE.—The Pol-
16 icy Committee shall initially meet at the call of the Co-
17 chairs, not later than 30 days after the last member is
18 selected under subsection (a). Subsequent meetings of the
19 Policy Committee shall be held at the call of the chair-
20 person. Through meetings, hearings, and working ses-
21 sions, the Policy Committee shall—

22 (1) make recommendations to the Co-chairs to
23 facilitate the timely convening of the Conference;

1 (2) submit to the Co-chairs a proposed agenda
2 for the Conference not later than 90 days after the
3 first meeting of the Policy Committee;

4 (3) make recommendations for the delegates of
5 the Conference;

6 (4) establish the number of delegates to be se-
7 lected under section 5; and

8 (5) establish an executive committee consisting
9 of 3 members of the Policy Committee to work with
10 delegates of the Conference.

11 **SEC. 5. CONFERENCE DELEGATES.**

12 To carry out the purposes of the Conference, the Co-
13 chairs shall bring together delegates representative of the
14 spectrum of thought in the fields of development and hu-
15 manitarian assistance, infrastructure development, trade,
16 democratic strengthening, and Haitian culture and his-
17 tory, without regard to political affiliation or past partisan
18 activity, who shall include—

19 (1) representatives of the United States and
20 international governments;

21 (2) members of the Haitian Diaspora;

22 (3) representatives of international nongovern-
23 mental organizations; and

24 (4) individuals from private sector entities.

1 **SEC. 6. CONFERENCE ADMINISTRATION.**

2 (a) ADMINISTRATION.—In administering this section,
3 the Co-chairs shall—

4 (1) provide written notice to all members of the
5 Policy Committee of each meeting, hearing, or work-
6 ing session of such Committee not later than 48
7 hours before the occurrence of such meeting, hear-
8 ing, or working session;

9 (2) request the cooperation and assistance of
10 the heads of such other Federal departments and
11 agencies as may be appropriate, including the detail-
12 ing of personnel;

13 (3) make available for public comment a pro-
14 posed agenda prepared by the Policy Committee,
15 which will reflect to the greatest extent possible the
16 major issues facing assistance to Haiti with the pur-
17 poses of the Conference set forth in section 3(c);

18 (4) prepare and make available background ma-
19 terials that the Co-chairs deem necessary for the use
20 of delegates to the Conference; and

21 (5) employ such additional personnel as may be
22 necessary to carry out the provisions of this Act
23 without regard to provisions of title 5, United States
24 Code, governing appointments in the competitive
25 service, and without regard to chapter 51 and sub-

1 chapter III of chapter 53 of such title relating to
2 classification and General Schedule pay rates.

3 (b) DUTIES.—In carrying out the Co-chairs’s respon-
4 sibilities and functions under this section, the Co-chairs
5 shall ensure that—

6 (1) the proposed agenda prepared under sub-
7 section (a)(3) is published in the Federal Register
8 not later than 30 days after such agenda is approved
9 by the Policy Committee;

10 (2) the personnel employed under subsection
11 (a)(5) are fairly balanced in terms of points of views
12 represented and are appointed without regard to po-
13 litical affiliation or previous partisan activities;

14 (3) the recommendations of the Conference are
15 not inappropriately influenced by any public official
16 or by any special interest, but instead are the result
17 of the independent and collective judgment of the
18 delegates of the Conference; and

19 (4) before the Conference is convened—

20 (A) current and adequate statistical data
21 and other information on health and social out-
22 comes in Haiti, and

23 (B) such information as may be necessary
24 to evaluate programs and policies relating to
25 Haiti,

1 which the Co-chairs may obtain by making grants to
2 or entering into an agreement with, public agencies
3 or nonprofit organizations, are readily available in
4 advance of the Conference to the delegates.

5 (c) GIFTS.—The Co-chairs may accept, on behalf of
6 the United States, gifts (in cash or in kind, including vol-
7 untary and uncompensated services), which shall be avail-
8 able to carry out this Act. Gifts of cash shall be available
9 in addition to amounts appropriated to carry out this Act.
10 Gifts may be earmarked by the donor or the executive
11 committee for a specific purpose.

12 (d) RECORDS.—The Co-chairs shall maintain records
13 regarding—

14 (1) the sources, amounts, and uses of gifts ac-
15 cepted under subsection (c); and

16 (2) the identity of each person receiving assist-
17 ance to carry out this Act, and the amount of such
18 assistance received by each such person.

19 **SEC. 7. REPORT OF THE CONFERENCE.**

20 (a) PRELIMINARY REPORT.—Not later than 100 days
21 after the Conference adjourns, the Policy Committee shall
22 prepare a preliminary report on the Conference which
23 shall be published in the Federal Register and submitted
24 to Members of Congress and relevant administration offi-
25 cials. The Policy Committee shall request that Members

1 of Congress and administration officials submit to the Pol-
2 icy Committee, not later than 45 days after receiving such
3 report, their views and findings on such report.

4 (b) FINAL REPORT.—Not later than 6 months after
5 the date on which the Conference adjourns, the Policy
6 Committee shall—

7 (1) prepare a final report of the Conference
8 which shall include a compilation of the views and
9 findings of the Members of Congress and adminis-
10 tration officials received under subsection (a); and

11 (2) publish in the Federal Register, and trans-
12 mit to the President and to Congress, the rec-
13 ommendations for the administrative action and the
14 legislation necessary to implement the recommenda-
15 tions contained in such report.

16 **SEC. 8. STATUS REPORTS.**

17 (a) INITIAL STATUS REPORT.—Not later than 1 year
18 after the date on which the Conference adjourns, the
19 Under Secretary of State for Public Diplomacy and Public
20 Affairs shall—

21 (1) prepare a status report documenting the im-
22 plementation of the recommendations contained in
23 the final report described in section 7(b)(1); and

1 (2) publish in the Federal Register, and trans-
2 mit to the President and to Congress, such status
3 report.

4 (b) **SUBSEQUENT STATUS REPORTS.**—Not later than
5 5 years after the date on which the Conference adjourns,
6 and every 5 years thereafter until all recommendations in
7 the final report described in section 7(b)(1) are achieved,
8 the Comptroller General shall—

9 (1) prepare a status report documenting the im-
10 plementation of the recommendations contained in
11 such final report; and

12 (2) publish in the Federal Register, and trans-
13 mit to the President and to Congress, such status
14 report.

15 **SEC. 9. COMMITTEE HEARINGS.**

16 (a) **HEARINGS ON REPORTS.**—The Committee on
17 Foreign Affairs of the House of Representatives and the
18 Committee on Foreign Relations of the Senate shall each
19 hold hearings on the recommendations and status reports
20 received by Congress under sections 7(b)(2), 8(a)(2), and
21 8(b)(2).

22 (b) **HEARINGS.**—The Committee on Foreign Affairs
23 of the House of Representatives and the Committee on
24 Foreign Relations of the Senate shall each hold annual
25 hearings on recovery and long-term development of Haiti.

1 (c) EXERCISE OF RULEMAKING AUTHORITY.—Sub-
2 sections (a) and (b) are enacted—

3 (1) as an exercise of the rulemaking power of
4 the House of Representatives and Senate, and, as
5 such, they shall be considered as part of the rules
6 of the House or Senate (as the case may be), and
7 such rules shall supersede any other rule of the
8 House or Senate only to the extent that rule is in-
9 consistent therewith; and

10 (2) with full recognition of the constitutional
11 right of either House to change such rules (so far
12 as relating to the procedure in such House) at any
13 time, in the same manner, and to the same extent
14 as in the case of any other rule of the House or Sen-
15 ate.

16 **SEC. 10. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.**

17 (a) AUTHORIZATION.—

18 (1) IN GENERAL.—There are authorized to be
19 appropriated to carry out this Act—

20 (A) such sums as may be necessary for the
21 first fiscal year in which the Policy Committee
22 plans the Conference and for the following fis-
23 cal year; and

24 (B) such sums as may be necessary for the
25 fiscal year in which the Conference is held.

1 (2) LIMITATION.—Any new spending authority
2 or new authority to enter into contracts under this
3 Act, and under which the United States is obligated
4 to make outlays, shall be effective only to the extent,
5 and in such amounts, as are provided in advance in
6 appropriations Acts.

7 (b) AVAILABILITY OF FUNDS.—

8 (1) IN GENERAL.—Except as provided in para-
9 graph (3), funds appropriated to carry out this Act
10 and funds received as gifts under section 6(c) shall
11 remain available for obligation or expenditure until
12 the expiration of the 1-year period beginning on the
13 date the Conference adjourns.

14 (2) UNOBLIGATED FUNDS.—Except as provided
15 in paragraph (3), any such funds neither obligated
16 nor expended before the expiration of the 1-year pe-
17 riod beginning on the date the Conference adjourns
18 shall be returned to the United States Treasury.

19 (3) CONFERENCE NOT CONVENED.—If the Con-
20 ference is not convened before December 31, 2012,
21 a trust fund shall be established and such funds
22 shall be deposited in the trust fund and shall only
23 be available for a future Conference on Haiti.

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