

118TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 4478

To facilitate access to existing resources with respect to United States citizens arbitrarily detained or kidnapped overseas, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

JULY 6, 2023

Mr. CLOUD introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Affairs

A BILL

To facilitate access to existing resources with respect to United States citizens arbitrarily detained or kidnapped overseas, 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 “Freeing Americans De-
5 tained Abroad Act”.

6 **SEC. 2. ADDITIONAL RESOURCES WITH RESPECT TO**
7 **UNITED STATES CITIZENS DETAINED OR KID-**
8 **NAPPED OVERSEAS.**

9 (a) AVAILABILITY OF EXISTING RESOURCES.—The
10 Secretary of State shall display on a publicly available

1 website of the Department a list of resources for which
2 United States citizens who have been detained or kid-
3 napped overseas may be eligible and may be accessed by
4 friends or family of such citizens. Such resources shall in-
5 clude legal services whether offered pro bono or with any
6 other payment or fee structure.

7 (b) TRAINING REQUIRED.—The Secretary of State
8 shall ensure that each Foreign Service officer serving at
9 any diplomatic or consular post overseas is trained, prior
10 to such posting, with respect to cases of detention of
11 United States citizens. Such training shall include each of
12 the following:

13 (1) What detention and arbitrary detention
14 cases are and how to identify cases of United States
15 citizens being arbitrarily detained.

16 (2) How to engage with United States citizens
17 overseas and family members of detained citizens.

18 (3) How to connect United States citizens or
19 their family members with legal assistance resources
20 overseas.

21 (4) How to liaise with the Special Presidential
22 Envoy for Hostage Affairs office with respect to
23 cases of arbitrary detention or kidnapping.

24 (c) HOSTAGE AFFAIRS OFFICERS.—The Secretary of
25 State, or an appropriate designee, shall designate one For-

1 eign Service officer at each overseas diplomatic or consular
2 post as a “hostage affairs officer”, who shall—

3 (1) serve as a principle liaison between the post
4 and the Special Presidential Envoy for Hostage Af-
5 fairs office;

6 (2) coordinate with the Special Presidential
7 Envoy for Hostage Affairs, the Ambassador to the
8 host country, and the Deputy Chief of Mission on ef-
9 forts to free United States citizens detained or kid-
10 napped in the host country;

11 (3) monitor and track all cases of United States
12 citizens detained or kidnapped in the host country
13 and the efforts to free such citizens;

14 (4) connect family members of individuals arbi-
15 trarily detained or kidnapped overseas with the re-
16 sources described in subsection (a) and other appro-
17 priate resources, including resources specific to the
18 host country;

19 (5) coordinate efforts within the post to ensure
20 United States citizens detained overseas are pro-
21 vided with appropriate assistance, including—

22 (A) at least monthly meetings with a mem-
23 ber of the United States Embassy;

24 (B) legal assistance;

25 (C) medical assistance; and

1 (D) establishing an trust account through
2 the Office of Overseas Citizens Services;

3 (6) ensure that any incoming or newly des-
4 igned hostage affairs officer is thoroughly briefed
5 on all ongoing cases of United States citizens de-
6 tained in the host country and the status of all ef-
7 forts to free those detained or kidnapped and shall
8 make available all information and materials col-
9 lected in accordance with paragraph (3) of this sub-
10 section; and

11 (7) report to the Special Presidential Envoy for
12 Hostage Affairs office cases of detention as such
13 cases are identified by hostage affairs officer.

14 (d) REPORT.—Not later than 180 days after the date
15 of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of State shall
16 submit to the Committee on Foreign Affairs of the House
17 of Representatives and the Committee on Foreign Rela-
18 tions of the Senate a report that includes—

19 (1) a description of the curriculum developed to
20 satisfy the training requirement under subsection
21 (b);

22 (2) the number of consular officers trained in
23 accordance with subsection (b) on overseas detention
24 of United States citizens;

1 (3) the number of diplomatic and consular
2 posts, as of the date of the submission of the report,
3 that have a designated hostage affairs officer in ac-
4 cordance with subsection (c); and

5 (4) the number of cases of arbitrary detention,
6 including those designated as arbitrarily detained or
7 kidnapped, of United States citizens in each country
8 at which the United States maintains a diplomatic
9 or consular post.

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