

118TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

S. 5523

To provide clarification of assistance related to safeguarding and the elimination of landmines, other explosive remnants of war, and conventional arms.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

DECEMBER 12, 2024

Mr. WELCH (for himself, Ms. BALDWIN, Mr. BOOKER, Mr. SANDERS, Mrs. MURRAY, Mr. WHITEHOUSE, and Mr. MERKLEY) introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations

A BILL

To provide clarification of assistance related to safeguarding and the elimination of landmines, other explosive remnants of war, and conventional arms.

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 “Conventional Weapons
5 Destruction and Legacy of Senator Patrick Leahy Act”.

6 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

7 Congress finds the following:

1 (1) Landmines and other unexploded ordnance
2 threaten the safety, health, and lives of civilian pop-
3 ulations and create humanitarian and development
4 challenges that have serious and lasting social, eco-
5 nomic, and security consequences for affected popu-
6 lations.

7 (2) During his 48 years serving in the Senate,
8 Senator Patrick Leahy, of Vermont, was a leading
9 voice in United States foreign policy and cham-
10 pioned numerous humanitarian causes, including
11 working to rid the world of the scourge of landmines
12 and other explosive remnants of war.

13 (3) Senator Leahy’s legacy on this issue in-
14 cludes numerous achievements, including in 1989
15 what was later named the Patrick J. Leahy War
16 Victims Fund which provides medical and other as-
17 sistance to victims of landmines and other war-re-
18 lated disabilities, section 1365 of the National De-
19 fense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 1993 (Pub-
20 lic Law 102–484; 22 U.S.C. 2778 note) (commonly
21 referred to as the “Landmine Export Moratorium
22 Act”), which prohibits the export and transfer of
23 antipersonnel landmines, and working to make the
24 United States the world leader in humanitarian
25 demining funding—all of which have saved countless

1 lives and made real improvements in the livelihoods
2 of people recovering from conflict.

3 (4) The United States has provided more than
4 \$4,600,000,000 in conventional weapons destruction
5 assistance to more than 120 countries and areas
6 since 1993, including humanitarian demining and
7 weapons security programs by the Department of
8 State, the Department of Defense, and the United
9 States Agency for International Development.

10 (5) Conventional weapons destruction assistance
11 has saved countless lives around the world, improves
12 stability and prosperity by clearing landmines and
13 other explosive remnants of war and returning land
14 to productive use, builds trust and deepens relation-
15 ships with key partners to accelerate achievement of
16 broader United States foreign policy objectives, plays
17 an important role in addressing other global issues
18 and United States interests, including food security
19 and combatting displacement and migration, and
20 provides employment opportunities to women.

21 (6) United States humanitarian demining pro-
22 grams, notably those devoted to clearing unexploded
23 bombs and other munitions from the Vietnam War,
24 have played a crucial role in building new partner-
25 ships in regions of geopolitical importance.

1 (7) Globally, in fiscal year 2022, it is estimated
2 that approximately—

3 (A) 200,100 explosive remnants of war
4 were destroyed, allowing for 60,200 acres of
5 land to be cleared and returned to public use;

6 (B) 37,500 landmines and 9,000 impro-
7 vised explosive devices were destroyed; and

8 (C) 53,700 civilian survivors of explosive
9 remnants of war injuries were provided assist-
10 ance and 3,400,000 civilians were provided life-
11 saving risk education to help avoid injury.

12 (8) Many countries lack the equipment and
13 technical capacity to properly manage government-
14 held weapons and ammunition stockpiles, and con-
15 ventional weapons destruction assistance enhances
16 United States and international security by destroy-
17 ing and securing small arms and light weapons, in-
18 cluding man-portable air defense systems
19 (MANPADS), at risk of accidental explosions as well
20 as proliferation to terrorists, insurgents, and other
21 violent non-state actors.

22 (9) In fiscal year 2022, approximately 14,100
23 small arms and light weapons, 223 MANPADS and
24 anti-tank guided missiles systems (ATGMs), and
25 3,900 metric tons of ammunition were destroyed.

1 **SEC. 3. CLARIFICATION OF ASSISTANCE RELATING TO**
2 **SAFEGUARDING AND ELIMINATION OF CON-**
3 **VENTIONAL WEAPONS.**

4 The Department of State Authorities Act of 2006
5 (Public Law 109–472) is amended by inserting after sec-
6 tion 11 (22 U.S.C. 2349bb–6) the following new section:

7 **“SEC. 11A. PURPOSES OF ASSISTANCE FOR HUMANITARIAN**
8 **DEMINING AND ELIMINATION OR SECURING**
9 **OF CONVENTIONAL WEAPONS.**

10 “(a) FINDINGS.—Congress finds the following:

11 “(1) Landmines and other explosive remnants
12 of war threaten populations after conflicts end, and
13 humanitarian demining is a fundamental part of re-
14 covery from conflict.

15 “(2) Clearing the land of explosive remnants of
16 war provides quantifiable threat reduction and al-
17 lows affected persons to return to their homes and
18 utilize the land.

19 “(3) Agriculture is disproportionately impacted
20 by unexploded ordnance, endangering farmers and
21 exacerbating food security. Subsistence farming,
22 larger-scale agriculture, grazing, and other related
23 activities are improved through humanitarian
24 demining.

25 “(4) Decontaminated land can be returned to
26 use for critical infrastructure development, and

1 many other uses that enhance sustainable recovery
2 and development.

3 “(5) Risk education bolsters the life-saving ben-
4 efits of humanitarian demining activities, helping to
5 minimize preventable injuries through community
6 engagement, which in turn creates local buy-in and
7 awareness of this vital assistance being provided by
8 the United States.

9 “(6) Many countries lack the equipment, re-
10 sources and facilities, and technical capacity to prop-
11 erly manage weapons and ammunition stockpiles.
12 Weapons and Ammunition Management (WAM) or
13 Physical Security and Stockpile Management
14 (PSSM) programs are security sector partnerships
15 based on the shared objectives of preventing the di-
16 version of weapons, ammunition, and explosives, as
17 well as unplanned explosions.

18 “(7) These projects include armory and muni-
19 tions store construction and rehabilitation, and other
20 security improvements, weapons and ammunition
21 disposal, stockpile management training and guide-
22 lines, needs assessments, stockpile risk assessments,
23 mitigation and management plans, and marking and
24 record-keeping.

1 “(8) This assistance, provided to a range of se-
2 curity forces including local police, is focused on pro-
3 viding necessary equipment and technical expertise
4 in a sustainable way, allowing partners to establish,
5 implement, and train in WAM/PSSM best practices
6 and compliance, as well as conduct their own safe
7 disposal of obsolete weapons, ammunition, and mu-
8 nitions.

9 “(9) These programs not only reduce instability
10 and civilian harm from armed violence caused by
11 weapons diversion, but also provide the United
12 States with key security partnerships. By reducing
13 armed violence and instability, these programs can
14 play a crucial role in addressing the root causes of
15 migration and forced displacement, of particular in-
16 terest to the United States as it pertains to its
17 southern border.

18 “(10) Risk education expands the scope of
19 WAM/PSSM programs beyond the principal partner-
20 ships, providing training to local police and commu-
21 nities on safer and more secure weapons storage and
22 salvage through community engagement that also
23 saves lives and creates buy-in and awareness of this
24 vital assistance that is being provided by the United
25 States.

1 “(b) PURPOSES OF HUMANITARIAN DEMINING AND
2 CONVENTIONAL WEAPONS ELIMINATION OR SECURING
3 ACTIVITIES.—

4 “(1) HUMANITARIAN DEMINING ACTIVITIES.—
5 The purposes of the activities authorized in section
6 11(b)(1) are—

7 “(A) to ensure the return of affected popu-
8 lations to the safe access to their homes and
9 land;

10 “(B) to enable affected populations to safe-
11 ly and productively utilize land for agriculture;

12 “(C) to clear threats from land to permit
13 and encourage critical infrastructure and other
14 development;

15 “(D) to educate affected populations about
16 the dangers of landmines and other unexploded
17 ordnance as well as United States efforts to
18 provide the lifesaving benefits of humanitarian
19 demining activities; and

20 “(E) to integrate humanitarian demining
21 and related activities with other assistance to
22 ensure effective recovery from conflict.

23 “(2) CONVENTIONAL WEAPONS ELIMINATION
24 OR SECURING ACTIVITIES.—The purposes of the ac-
25 tivities authorized in section 11(b)(3) are—

1 “(A) to ensure the safe securing and diver-
2 sion prevention of weapons, ammunition, and
3 explosives in the stores of foreign partners;

4 “(B) to build the capacity of the security
5 sectors of foreign partners to properly eliminate
6 or manage weapons and ammunition stockpiles
7 through WAM, PSSM, and related programs;

8 “(C) to educate local police and other offi-
9 cials and the wider population at the local level
10 on safer and more secure weapons storage and
11 salvage as well as United States efforts to pro-
12 vide the lifesaving benefits of conventional
13 weapons elimination, securing, and manage-
14 ment;

15 “(D) to establish and strengthen security
16 cooperation with foreign partners to reduce
17 armed violence and instability in support of im-
18 portant United States national security and for-
19 eign policy objectives; and

20 “(E) to integrate conventional weapons
21 elimination and securing and related activities
22 with other assistance to ensure effective recov-
23 ery from conflict.”.

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