

119TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 2614

To establish a program and strategy to support internet freedom and counter censorship efforts in Iran, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

APRIL 2, 2025

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina (for himself and Mr. PANETTA) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Affairs, and in addition to the Committees on the Judiciary, Financial Services, and Intelligence (Permanent Select), 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 establish a program and strategy to support internet freedom and counter censorship efforts in Iran, 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 “Maximum Support
5 Act”.

6 **SEC. 2. STATEMENTS OF POLICY.**

7 It is the policy of the United States to provide max-
8 imum support to the people of Iran in their desire to bring

1 about a new political system in Iran based upon democ-
2 racy, human rights, and rule of law for all citizens of Iran.

3 **SEC. 3. PROGRAM AND STRATEGY TO SUPPORT INTERNET**
4 **FREEDOM AND COUNTER CENSORSHIP EF-**
5 **FORTS IN IRAN.**

6 (a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 180 days after the
7 date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of State,
8 in conjunction with the Secretary of the Treasury and the
9 CEO of the U.S. Agency for Global Media, shall establish
10 a new interagency task force to support internet freedom
11 and counter censorship efforts in Iran. In addition the
12 Secretary of State, Secretary of Treasury and CEO of the
13 U.S. Agency for Global Media, acting as part of this task
14 force, shall develop and submit to Congress a strategy to
15 support the Iranian people in countering state and non-
16 state actors' efforts to create deliberate barriers to inter-
17 net access, including shutting down or slowing connectivity
18 and blocking online content protected by international
19 human rights standards.

20 (b) ELEMENTS.—The strategy required under sub-
21 section (a) shall include the following:

22 (1) A description of efforts to establish a Vir-
23 tual Private Network (VPN) service specifically de-
24 signed to enable the Iranian people to bypass gov-

1 ernment censorship and access the internet freely.

2 The objectives of this VPN service shall include—

3 (A) ensuring secure and uncensored inter-
4 net access for users in Iran;

5 (B) providing robust protection against
6 surveillance and data interception by Iranian
7 authorities and others;

8 (C) maintaining high standards of speed
9 and reliability to ensure usability; and

10 (D) regularly updating and adapting the
11 service to respond to new security challenges
12 and censorship techniques employed by the Ira-
13 nian government, IRGC and Iranian judiciary.

14 (2) A description of the use of enhanced sat-
15 ellite communications through direct-to-cell tech-
16 nology and eSIM and eSIM device distribution, in-
17 cluding—

18 (A) the incorporation of services such as
19 services that provide seamless internet access
20 directly to cellular devices and other technology
21 to facilitate seamless internet access in Iran;
22 and

23 (B) a program for the distribution of
24 eSIMs and eSIM devices to individuals in Iran,

1 enabling them to connect to satellite internet
2 services quickly and securely.

3 (3) A description of Iranian regime restrictions
4 on the import of cell phones—

5 (A) detailing Iranian government, IRGC,
6 and Iranian judiciary restrictions on iPhone 14,
7 iPhone 15, and iPhone 16 devices out of fear
8 of satellite internet technology including re-
9 quirements that such phones be registered with
10 the government and the impact of past bans on
11 such phones;

12 (B) outlining steps to counter the regime’s
13 efforts to restrict access to devices capable of
14 utilizing satellite-based internet services; and

15 (C) describing measures by the Secretary
16 of State to curb any efforts by the regime to
17 create secondary or black markets that would
18 allow the Iranian government, IRGC, or Iranian
19 judiciary or their affiliates to profit from the
20 sale of these devices through controlled chan-
21 nels.

22 (4) A detailed vetting plan for technology com-
23 panies or individuals contracted to expand internet
24 access in Iran, ensuring that no companies or indi-

1 individuals affiliated with the Iranian regime are in-
2 volved in initiatives to promote internet freedom.

3 (5) A description of which VPNs in Iran are
4 built by the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps
5 (IRGC) and other entities controlled by the Govern-
6 ment of Iran or its Supreme Leader and how such
7 VPNs are used by the regime to surveil and monitor
8 users, as well as a plan to counter these deceptive
9 tactics and raise public awareness about the risks
10 associated with regime-affiliated VPNs.

11 (6) A detailed plan to support satellite-to-cell
12 internet technology in Iran, ensuring that—

13 (A) such technology cannot be censored or
14 jammed by the regime; and

15 (B) access does not require the transfer or
16 sale of hardware that could be controlled by the
17 IRGC or sold on secondary markets.

18 (7) providing secure communication tools,
19 encryption technology, and cybersecurity software
20 designed specifically for high-risk users;

21 (8) cybersecurity training programs for Iranian
22 activists, dissidents, and journalists focused on iden-
23 tifying regime-sponsored cyberattacks, phishing
24 schemes, and digital surveillance tactics;

1 (9) rapid response technical support for individ-
2 uals and organizations experiencing cyber threats or
3 attacks; and

4 (10) a system of regular evaluation and report-
5 ing to Congress detailing cybersecurity threats en-
6 countered and measures undertaken to mitigate such
7 threats.

8 (c) FORM.—The strategy required under subsection
9 (a) shall be submitted in unclassified form.

10 (d) IMPLEMENTATION PLAN.—Not later than 60
11 days after the date on which the strategy required by sub-
12 section (a) is developed, the task force shall submit to
13 Congress a plan for implementing the strategy.

14 **SEC. 4. CONFISCATION OF THE ASSETS OF THE GOVERN-**
15 **MENT OF IRAN AND PUPPET TERRORIST OR-**
16 **GANIZATIONS.**

17 (a) IN GENERAL.—The President shall—

18 (1) confiscate, through instructions or licenses
19 or in such other manner as the President determines
20 appropriate, funds of the Government of Iran and
21 all agents or instrumentalities of the Government of
22 Iran that are subject to the jurisdiction of the
23 United States; and

1 (2) deposit funds confiscated under paragraph
2 (1) in the general fund of the Treasury to be used
3 for purposes described in subsection (c).

4 (b) VESTING.—All right, title, and interest in funds
5 confiscated under subsection (a) shall vest in the Govern-
6 ment of the United States.

7 (c) PURPOSES.—Funding may be provided to provide
8 maximum support to persons and entities within Iran
9 which are working for a transition to a democratic govern-
10 ment based upon human rights and rule of law. To the
11 extent practicable, funding must be provided to persons
12 and entities with transparent measurable results, includ-
13 ing through providing detailed annual information on ex-
14 penditures and outcomes. In particular, funding may be
15 provided to:

16 (1) Establish a strikers fund to provide assist-
17 ance to vetted Iranians engaged in nonviolent strikes
18 and other forms of nonviolent opposition to the re-
19 gime in Iran done in a way which does not materi-
20 ally benefit the regime in Iran.

21 (2) Providing humanitarian assistance and
22 medical supplies to the people of Iran delivered
23 through partners that uphold internationally recog-
24 nized humanitarian principles with robust moni-
25 toring to ensure assistance is reaching intended

1 beneficiaries in a way which does not materially ben-
2 efit the regime in Iran.

3 (3) Establish a fund to support efforts to docu-
4 ment and publicize gross violations of internationally
5 recognized human rights and international humani-
6 tarian law in Iran, including efforts related to
7 extrajudicial killings, torture, severe forms of traf-
8 ficking in persons such as slavery, forced labor, and
9 sexual exploitation, and to hold perpetrators ac-
10 countable.

11 (4) The funding of efforts of the task force to
12 promote internet freedom in Iran described in sec-
13 tion 3(a) of this Act.

14 (d) AUDIT.—The Comptroller of the United States,
15 and the Inspector Generals of the Department of State,
16 Department of Treasury, and USAID shall report to Con-
17 gress annually after engaging in annual audits of funds
18 expended based upon subsection(c), including whether or
19 not the regime in Iran materially benefitted from any ex-
20 penditure of funds. If the Comptroller of the United
21 States, or any of the Inspector Generals, determine that
22 the regime in Iran has benefited from any expenditure
23 such expenditures must be immediately terminated, and
24 any recommendations to prevent future diversion of funds
25 must be immediately implemented.

1 **SEC. 5. STRATEGY TO ENSURE SANCTIONS DO NOT IMPEDE**
2 **INTERNET FREEDOM FOR THE PEOPLE OF**
3 **IRAN.**

4 (a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 180 days after the
5 date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of State,
6 in conjunction with the Secretary of the Treasury, shall
7 develop and submit to Congress a strategy to ensure that
8 sanctions imposed on the regime in Iran do not inadvert-
9 ently prevent Iranian civilians from accessing technology
10 and tools necessary for internet freedom and open commu-
11 nication.

12 (b) ELEMENTS.—The strategy required under sub-
13 section (a) shall include—

14 (1) An examination of existing sanctions and
15 their impact on the availability of internet freedom
16 tools for the people of Iran, including—

17 (A) an assessment of any unintended re-
18 strictions that limit access to Virtual Private
19 Networks (VPNs), secure messaging applica-
20 tions, satellite communication technology, cloud-
21 based services, and other tools necessary for cir-
22 cumventing government censorship; and

23 (B) an analysis of how sanctions may af-
24 fect the ability of technology companies and
25 non-governmental organizations to provide serv-

1 ices and support to the Iranian people without
2 materially benefiting the regime.

3 (2) The issuance of specific licenses and waivers
4 that facilitate internet freedom in Iran while ensuring that such measures do not enable or provide financial benefit to the regime, including—

7 (A) the development of clear guidelines for
8 private sector entities on how they can provide
9 internet-related services to Iranian civilians
10 without violating U.S. sanctions;

11 (B) a streamlined process for approving
12 waivers and licenses that support internet access and digital communication tools for the
13 Iranian people; and

15 (C) measures to prevent the misuse of such
16 licenses and waivers by entities affiliated with
17 the Iranian government or Iranian judiciary or
18 the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC),
19 or other affiliated of the Iranian government including a regular review process to ensure that
20 waivers are not being misused by regime-aligned groups.

23 (3) A plan to work with technology companies,
24 civil society organizations, and international partners

1 to expand access to censorship-resistant communica-
2 tion technologies in Iran, including—

3 (A) identifying key stakeholders capable of
4 providing secure and effective internet access
5 solutions;

6 (B) ensuring companies seeking to provide
7 such services are properly vetted to prevent in-
8 advertent assistance to the Iranian regime; and

9 (C) enhancing public awareness campaigns
10 within Iran about the availability of secure
11 internet access tools.

12 (4) A detailed mechanism for continuously mon-
13 itoring and assessing the effectiveness of these meas-
14 ures, including—

15 (A) regular reporting to Congress on the
16 impact of licenses and waivers issued to facili-
17 tate internet freedom in Iran;

18 (B) recommendations for further actions to
19 improve access to open and secure communica-
20 tion technologies; and

21 (C) an evaluation of the Iranian regime's
22 attempts to counteract these measures and
23 strategies to mitigate such efforts.

24 (c) FORM.—The strategy required under subsection
25 (a) shall be submitted in unclassified form.

1 (d) IMPLEMENTATION PLAN.—Not later than 60
2 days after the date on which the strategy required by sub-
3 section (a) is developed, the task force shall submit to
4 Congress a plan for implementing the strategy.

5 **SEC. 6. STRATEGY TO PROVIDE MAXIMUM SUPPORT TO**
6 **THE IRANIAN PEOPLE IN THEIR EFFORTS TO**
7 **ESTABLISH A NEW POLITICAL SYSTEM BASED**
8 **ON THE RULE OF LAW, DEMOCRACY, AND**
9 **HUMAN RIGHTS.**

10 (a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 180 days after the
11 date of the enactment of this Act, the President shall de-
12 velop and submit to Congress a strategy detailing steps
13 to provide maximum support to the Iranian people in their
14 efforts to bring about a transition to a new political system
15 and government based on the rule of law, democracy, and
16 human rights.

17 (b) ELEMENTS.—The strategy required under sub-
18 section (a) shall include—

19 (1) DIPLOMATIC EFFORTS OF THE DEPART-
20 MENT OF STATE.—A description of how the Sec-
21 retary of State will—

22 (A) use diplomatic efforts to support the
23 Iranian protest movements in their pursuit of
24 democratic governance; and

1 (B) establish a Special Representative for
2 Maximum Support including an Office for the
3 Special Representative to coordinate U.S. Gov-
4 ernment efforts to assist the Iranian people in
5 their democratic aspirations and to serve as a
6 key liaison with international partners in sup-
7 port of this objective.

8 (2) MAXIMUM ECONOMIC PRESSURE BY THE
9 DEPARTMENT OF THE TREASURY.—A description of
10 how the Secretary of the Treasury will—

11 (A) implement and enforce sanctions tar-
12 geting key sectors of the Iranian economy that
13 sustain the regime’s oppressive activities;

14 (B) disrupt the financial networks that fa-
15 cilitate the Iranian regime’s terrorist activities
16 and human rights abuses; and

17 (C) coordinate with international partners
18 to maximize the effectiveness of economic meas-
19 ures aimed at weakening the regime’s ability to
20 suppress its people.

21 (3) INTELLIGENCE SUPPORT FOR THE IRANIAN
22 PROTEST MOVEMENT.—A description of how the In-
23 telligence Community will—

1 (A) use intelligence-gathering capabilities
2 to monitor and expose the Iranian regime's ef-
3 forts to suppress dissent and target protestors;

4 (B) provide support to Iranian civil society
5 actors and opposition groups to enhance their
6 security and operational capabilities; and

7 (C) assist in identifying and countering
8 disinformation campaigns initiated by the Ira-
9 nian regime to delegitimize democratic move-
10 ments.

11 (4) MEDIA FREEDOM AND INFORMATION CAM-
12 PAIGNS.—A description of how the United States
13 Agency for Global Media (USAGM) will—

14 (A) expand and enhance broadcasting ef-
15 forts to provide the Iranian people with accu-
16 rate and unbiased news coverage on the situa-
17 tion in Iran;

18 (B) utilize social media platforms to expose
19 and highlight the Iranian regime's crimes
20 against its own people, including human rights
21 abuses, corruption, and acts of violence against
22 protestors; and

23 (C) support independent Iranian journal-
24 ists and media outlets in their efforts to report
25 freely and counter the regime's propaganda.

1 (5) INTERAGENCY COORDINATION.—A plan for
2 ensuring coordination between relevant agencies, in-
3 cluding the Department of State, the Department of
4 the Treasury, the Intelligence Community, and
5 USAGM, to ensure a comprehensive and unified ap-
6 proach in supporting the Iranian people’s pursuit of
7 democracy.

8 (c) FORM.—The strategy required under subsection
9 (a) shall be submitted in unclassified form but may include
10 a classified annex if necessary.

11 (d) IMPLEMENTATION PLAN.—Not later than 60
12 days after the date on which the strategy required by sub-
13 section (a) is developed, the task force shall submit to
14 Congress a plan for implementing the strategy.

15 **SEC. 7. DESIGNATION OF THE IRANIAN MINISTRY OF IN-**
16 **TELLIGENCE AND SECURITY AS A FOREIGN**
17 **TERRORIST ORGANIZATION.**

18 (a) FINDINGS.—Congress finds the following:

19 (1) The Iranian Ministry of Intelligence and Se-
20 curity (MOIS) is the primary intelligence apparatus
21 of the Government of Iran, responsible for espio-
22 nage, covert operations, surveillance, cyberattacks,
23 kidnappings, assassinations of dissidents abroad,
24 and direct support for terrorist proxies.

1 (2) MOIS provides financial, logistical, and
2 operational support to terrorist groups already des-
3 ignated as Foreign Terrorist Organizations by the
4 United States, including Hezbollah and designated
5 militias operating in the Middle East.

6 (3) MOIS poses a direct and ongoing threat to
7 the national security of the United States, American
8 citizens abroad, and U.S. allies through continued
9 support for terrorism, espionage operations, and acts
10 of violence.

11 (b) SENSE OF CONGRESS.—It is the sense of Con-
12 gress that—

13 (1) the activities of MOIS satisfy the statutory
14 criteria for designation as a Foreign Terrorist Orga-
15 nization under section 219 of the Immigration and
16 Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. 1189); and

17 (2) formally designating MOIS as an FTO
18 would advance the national security interests of the
19 United States, strengthen enforcement against its
20 global operations, and enhance international efforts
21 to isolate its terrorist networks.

22 (c) DETERMINATION AND REPORT.—

23 (1) REQUIREMENT FOR DETERMINATION.—Not
24 later than 90 days after the date of the enactment
25 of this Act, the Secretary of State, in consultation

1 with the Secretary of the Treasury and the Attorney
2 General, shall determine, pursuant to the criteria
3 specified in section 219 of the Immigration and Na-
4 tionality Act (8 U.S.C. 1189), whether MOIS meets
5 the criteria to be designated as a Foreign Terrorist
6 Organization.

7 (2) DESIGNATION.—If the Secretary of State
8 determines that MOIS meets such criteria, con-
9 sistent with section 219 of the Immigration and Na-
10 tionality Act (8 U.S.C. 1189), the Secretary shall
11 designate MOIS as a Foreign Terrorist Organization
12 and promptly submit to the appropriate congres-
13 sional committees a detailed justification for such
14 designation, including an assessment of threats
15 posed by MOIS.

16 **SEC. 8. STRATEGY TO ENCOURAGE DEFECTIONS FROM THE**
17 **GOVERNMENT OF IRAN.**

18 (a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 180 days after the
19 enactment of this Act, the Secretary of State, in consulta-
20 tion with the Secretary of the Treasury and Director of
21 National Intelligence, shall develop and submit to Con-
22 gress a strategy aimed at encouraging and facilitating de-
23 fections by Iranian officials and members of security
24 forces who seek to support democratic change in Iran.

1 (b) ELEMENTS.—The strategy required under sub-
2 section (a) shall include—

3 (1) identification of mechanisms to securely
4 communicate with potential defectors, including se-
5 cure digital channels utilizing encryption tech-
6 nologies and private intermediaries;

7 (2) measures providing assurances of safety and
8 security to defectors and their families;

9 (3) establishment of a dedicated interagency
10 working group tasked with managing defections, en-
11 suring defector safety, verifying information pro-
12 vided by defectors, and mitigating potential intel-
13 ligence risks;

14 (4) incentives for defectors who can signifi-
15 cantly contribute to democratic change or who pro-
16 vide actionable intelligence about regime operations,
17 including potential financial assistance, employment
18 support, and housing assistance in coordination with
19 relevant domestic agencies;

20 (5) measures for publicizing successful defec-
21 tions, when appropriate and consistent with security
22 protocols, to encourage additional defections within
23 the regime; and

24 (6) coordination with international partners to
25 share best practices, jointly facilitate defections, and

1 ensure defectors receive international protection, as
2 needed.

3 (c) FORM.—The strategy required under subsection
4 (a) shall be submitted in unclassified form but may con-
5 tain a classified annex if necessary.

6 (d) IMPLEMENTATION PLAN.—Not later than 60
7 days after the submission of the strategy, the interagency
8 working group shall submit to Congress a detailed imple-
9 mentation plan for the strategy.

10 **SEC. 9. CYBERSECURITY ASSISTANCE TO IRANIAN DIS-**
11 **SIDENTS.**

12 (a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of State, in coordi-
13 nation with the Director of National Intelligence, shall es-
14 tablish a cybersecurity support program specifically tai-
15 lored to assist Iranian dissidents, journalists, and civil so-
16 ciety organizations in countering cyber threats posed by
17 the Iranian regime.

18 (b) ELEMENTS.—The cybersecurity support program
19 shall include—

20 (1) providing secure communication tools,
21 encryption technology, and cybersecurity software
22 designed specifically for high-risk users;

23 (2) cybersecurity training programs for Iranian
24 activists, dissidents, and journalists focused on iden-

1 tifying regime-sponsored cyberattacks, phishing
2 schemes, and digital surveillance tactics;

3 (3) rapid response technical support for individ-
4 uals and organizations experiencing cyber threats or
5 attacks; and

6 (4) a system of regular evaluation and report-
7 ing to Congress detailing cybersecurity threats en-
8 countered and measures undertaken to mitigate such
9 threats.

10 **SEC. 10. STRATEGY TO ENCOURAGE DEFECTIONS FROM**
11 **THE GOVERNMENT OF IRAN.**

12 (a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 180 days after the
13 enactment of this Act, the Secretary of State, in consulta-
14 tion with the Secretary of the Treasury and Director of
15 National Intelligence, shall develop and submit to Con-
16 gress a strategy aimed at encouraging defections by Ira-
17 nian officials and members of security forces who seek to
18 support democratic change in Iran.

19 (b) STRATEGY DESCRIBED.—The strategy required
20 under subsection (a) shall include—

21 (1) identification of mechanisms to securely
22 communicate with potential defectors, including se-
23 cure digital channels utilizing encryption tech-
24 nologies and private intermediaries;

1 (2) measures providing assurances of safety and
2 security to defectors and their families;

3 (3) establishment of a dedicated interagency
4 working group tasked with managing defections, en-
5 suring defector safety, verifying information pro-
6 vided by defectors, and mitigating potential intel-
7 ligence risks;

8 (4) incentives for defectors who can signifi-
9 cantly contribute to democratic change or who pro-
10 vide actionable intelligence about regime operations,
11 including potential financial assistance, employment
12 support, and housing assistance in coordination with
13 relevant domestic agencies;

14 (5) measures for publicizing successful defec-
15 tions, when appropriate and consistent with security
16 protocols, to encourage additional defections within
17 the regime; and

18 (6) coordination with international partners to
19 share best practices, jointly facilitate defections, and
20 ensure defectors receive international protection, as
21 needed.

22 (c) FORM.—The strategy required under subsection
23 (a) shall be submitted in unclassified form but may con-
24 tain a classified annex if necessary.

1 (d) IMPLEMENTATION PLAN.—Not later than 60
2 days after the submission of the strategy, the interagency
3 working group shall submit to Congress a detailed imple-
4 mentation plan for the strategy.

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