

Now, I call upon this Congress to answer the call of help—to act in accordance with our long-standing record of supporting the Haitian people in recovering and building a future worthy of their aspirations.

The “Haiti Development, Accountability, and Institutional Transparency Initiative Act” is our response to this call for help.

H.R. 2471—a bicameral and bipartisan effort—urgently upgrades our U.S. foreign assistance strategy and strengthens human rights, promotes freedom of the press, and supports disaster resilience and reconstruction efforts in Haiti.

I commend my colleagues, particularly the gentleman from New York, Congressman HAKEEM JEFFRIES, for shining a light on this issue, and remaining firm in our commitment to the Haitian people.

Let us, with one voice, irrespective of party, come together and affirm our role as a bulwark of democracy in the world and good neighbor in the hemisphere.

I urge all Members to join me in voting for this long overdue but enormously beneficial legislation.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from New York (Mr. MEEKS) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 2471, as amended.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds being in the affirmative, the ayes have it.

Mrs. GREENE of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to section 3(s) of House Resolution 8, the yeas and nays are ordered.

Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, further proceedings on this motion are postponed.

GLOBAL LEARNING LOSS ASSESSMENT ACT OF 2021

Mr. MEEKS. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 1500) to direct the Administrator of the United States Agency for International Development to submit to Congress a report on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on global basic education programs, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 1500

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the “Global Learning Loss Assessment Act of 2021”.

SEC. 2. FINDINGS.

Congress finds the following:

(1) Before the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (commonly referred to as “COVID-19”) pandemic began, 258,000,000 children were out of school globally, including 130,000,000 girls.

(2) Students already at a disadvantage before COVID-19 will experience greater learning loss, thereby worsening inequity and inequality.

(3) Approximately 90 percent of the world’s student population—over 1,600,000,000 children and youth—have had their education disrupted by school closure due to COVID-19.

(4) School closures lead to interrupted learning, poor nutrition, gaps in childcare, increased dropout rates, exposure to violence, and social isolation.

(5) Up to 24,000,000 children are at risk of dropping out of school permanently due to rising levels of child poverty associated with the pandemic.

(6) School closure and remote learning is especially burdensome on girls, who are frequently expected to shoulder more household chores and responsibilities and are more vulnerable to gender-based violence.

(7) During the Ebola epidemic, nationwide school closures in Sierra Leone in 2014 led to increased instances of sexual- and gender-based violence, teenage pregnancy, school dropout, and child labor for girls.

(8) More than 60 percent of national distance learning alternatives rely exclusively on online platforms but two-thirds of the world’s school aged children, or 1,300,000,000 children aged 3 through 17, do not have internet connection in their homes, and schools and local learning centers also frequently have inadequate internet connectivity. Eighty percent of students in sub-Saharan Africa lack such access, with an even higher rate for girls.

(9) Children and youth with disabilities are particularly vulnerable to the health, education, and socioeconomic consequences of the pandemic. As a further challenge, distance learning tools are not always accessible to learners with disabilities or those with complex learning needs, especially in poorer and rural households.

(10) Before the COVID-19 pandemic, refugee children were twice as likely to be out of school as other youth, and school closures and a lack of access to distance learning tools threaten to make the education gap among refugee children even more severe.

(11) The economic downturn caused by the COVID-19 pandemic could lead to an education financing gap of \$77,000,000,000 in low- and middle-income countries over the next 2 years.

(12) The economic cost of school closures could be up to \$1,337 per student, which on a global scale equates to approximately \$10,000,000,000,000 in lost economic output over the coming generation.

SEC. 3. STATEMENT OF POLICY.

It is the policy of the United States that United States-funded basic education programs operating in low- and middle-income countries should seek to—

(1) provide inclusive learning opportunities for students and teachers, especially for the most marginalized, including girls, children with disabilities, and previously out of school children;

(2) build local capacity and help countries strengthen their education systems, including opportunities for early childhood development;

(3) improve the availability, delivery, and quality of education services from early childhood through secondary education;

(4) improve equity and safety in education services; and

(5) support the return of children to school who have experienced interruptions in their education due to the COVID-19 pandemic and work to enroll previously out-of-school children and youth, particularly the most marginalized.

SEC. 4. REPORT.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Administrator of the United States Agency for International Development, acting through the Senior Coordinator for International Basic Education Assistance and in consultation with the Senior Coordinator for Gender Equality and Women’s Em-

powerment, shall submit to the appropriate congressional committees a report on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on United States Agency for International Development basic education programs.

(b) MATTERS TO BE INCLUDED.—The report required under subsection (a) shall include, at a minimum, the following elements:

(1) An assessment of the impact of COVID-19 on such basic education programs, including the magnitude of learning loss that will result from protracted school closures and the specific effects of school and learning space closures on marginalized children and youth, including girls, minority populations, displaced children, and those with disabilities.

(2) An assessment comparing academic outcomes of beneficiaries of United States Agency for International Development basic education programs, as practical and appropriate, between those that attend schools that remain closed or continue to operate remotely since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic and schools that have resumed in-person instruction.

(3) A description of the effectiveness, cost, accessibility, and reach of the most commonly used forms of distance learning in low- and middle-income countries and low-resource contexts.

(4) A description of efforts to pivot and adapt such basic education programs during the COVID-19 pandemic, including an overview of existing data on funding and programmatic focus disaggregated by gender, country, education level, and disability.

(5) An identification and description of any gaps in, or barriers to, reaching and educating marginalized populations, such as girls, children with disabilities, displaced children, or other children adversely affected by the COVID-19 pandemic with distance learning interventions.

(6) A description of the United States Agency for International Development’s plan and needed authorities and resources to prevent degradation of such basic education programs and to support, as necessary and appropriate, continued distance learning interventions, safe school reopenings, assessments of student learning levels, remedial and accelerated learning, re-enrollment campaigns for out-of-school children and youth, and education system strengthening and resilience-building efforts.

(7) An analysis of the coordination between the United States Agency for International Development and other actors in global basic education policy and programming to provide education during the COVID-19 pandemic, including partner organizations, faith based-organizations, donors, and multilateral organizations.

(8) A description of opportunities to partner and support efforts to expand access to digital infrastructure, internet connectivity, and learning resources in areas that lack access to digital and remote learning infrastructure and resources, including rural and remote communities.

(c) PUBLIC AVAILABILITY.—The report required by subsection (a) shall be made available to the public.

(d) APPROPRIATE CONGRESSIONAL COMMITTEES DEFINED.—In this section, the term “appropriate congressional committees” means—

(1) the Committee on Foreign Affairs and the Committee on Appropriations of the House of Representatives; and

(2) the Committee on Foreign Relations and the Committee on Appropriations of the Senate.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from

New York (Mr. MEEKS) and the gentlewoman from California (Mrs. KIM) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New York.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. MEEKS. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on H.R. 1500, as amended.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from New York?

There was no objection.

Mr. MEEKS. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 1500, the Global Learning Loss Assessment Act of 2021.

I thank Representative HOULAHAN for authoring this bipartisan bill and for her leadership and strong advocacy for children and education around the world.

Over the past year and a half, we have seen everyday lives disrupted in unimaginable ways due to COVID-19. One of the biggest disruptions has been in the realm of education. From primary school to graduate school, students around the world have seen their education interrupted, challenged, adapted, and forever changed by this pandemic.

The United States has long supported basic education efforts around the world, with its most recent champion, former Congresswoman NITA LOWEY, being an invaluable advocate. It is therefore crucial that the United States understand the effects of COVID-19 on international basic education programs and use that data to respond to current crises and better prepare for future pandemics.

Research has already shown that every day and every year in school counts. Women earn up to 12 percent more for every additional year they stay in school. However, UNESCO estimates that as many as 11 million—I repeat, 11 million—girls won't return to school after COVID, which increased their risk of forced labor, early marriage, and limiting their professional and economic opportunities.

This bill requires the United States Agency for International Development to submit a report to Congress on the impacts of COVID-19 on USAID's basic education programs and global learning loss, including the magnitude of global learning loss that will result from protracted school closures, descriptions of forms of distance learning in low resource contexts, analysis of how school closures affected marginalized children, data on Agency programs being carried out to support continued learning during the pandemic, and a description of what is needed to help mitigate learning loss and help students get back on the right track.

Again, I thank Representative HOULAHAN for her work on this bill and

her commitment to ensuring that we are fully aware of how COVID-19 has placed development gains at risk and to finding the best path forward to prevent further backsliding.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this legislation, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mrs. KIM of California. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleagues, Representatives HOULAHAN and FITZPATRICK, for their work on the Global Learning Loss Assessment Act.

As of December 2020, the United Nations estimated that school classrooms for one in five children, which is over 320 million children, remained closed. Further reports indicate more than 880 million children worldwide faced disruptions to their education due to full and partial school closures.

The continued closure of schools and classrooms is having a devastating impact on the education and the development of the next generation. This bill requires a report on COVID-19 impacts on the United States to support education programs in developing countries.

Last year, the United States provided over \$900 million to support basic education programs, including support for teacher training, curriculum development, and expanding access to education for refugees and communities in conflict zones.

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In many countries, including here in the United States, schools were forced to pivot to virtual learning or close entirely. This bill does not provide any additional assistance. Instead, it requires USAID to assess how previously appropriated funds have been impacted by school closures and other COVID-19-related issues.

It also requires an assessment of how the administration and our implementing partners are changing programs to avoid backsliding in education outcomes as COVID-19 continues to prevent regular schooling.

It is critical that we understand the impacts of COVID-19 on our programs to ensure our foreign aid is used efficiently and effectively.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this important measure, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. MEEKS. Mr. Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the gentlewoman from Pennsylvania (Ms. HOULAHAN), a valued member of the House Foreign Affairs Committee.

Ms. HOULAHAN. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank Chairman MEEKS and Ranking Member MCCAUL for their leadership on this critical issue and for working with me on this bill to get it not only passed out of committee, but here on the floor for consideration on a suspension basis.

I have had a really eclectic background before joining Congress, but most recently, I was a high school

chemistry teacher in north Philadelphia, and I also ran a nonprofit focused on early childhood literacy for pre-K through fourth-grade kids. So I am particularly passionate about the issue that we are talking about today.

Mr. Speaker, it is an honor to rise today to ask my colleagues for their support of H.R. 1500, the Global Learning Loss Assessment Act.

My bill will direct the U.S. Agency for International Development to submit a report to Congress on the impacts of COVID-19 on the Agency's basic education programs and global learning.

Investing in global education is not a humanitarian issue. It is an economic and national security issue. A more educated global population paves the way for a more stable global economy, and what is clear is that COVID-19 has caused a dramatic loss in global learning.

Our first step must be to clearly identify the scope of this loss so that we can begin the work of bridging that gap. The estimates are alarming. Ninety percent of students worldwide, meaning 1.6 billion youth, have had severe interruptions in their education due to COVID-19. This gap has the potential to hinder global efforts on economic justice, lasting peace, poverty eradication, ending world hunger, gender equity, and so much more.

As a steadfast advocate for women and girls around the world, I am also particularly concerned about the harrowing consequences that school-aged girls face in light of school closures, including an increased likelihood of gender-based violence.

To shore up the increasing gaps in learning and to preserve massive gains the United States has made in global education rates, we have to understand the extent of damage this pandemic has caused. This bill will arm us with the data that we need to move quickly, invest effectively across our USAID programs, and make our international basic education programs more resilient to crises such as these.

We cannot afford to ignore the devastating effects that COVID-19 has had on students around our globe. Education loss will continue without intentional steps on our behalf, and so that is why I am so grateful to Speaker PELOSI, Chairman MEEKS, and Mr. MCCAUL for placing my bipartisan Global Learning Loss Assessment Act here before the Congress for a vote today.

In particular, I want to thank and express my deep appreciation to Representative FITZPATRICK and Representative QUIGLEY for working so closely with my office in introducing this legislation with me.

Their steadfast education to learning and students around the world is to be commended. This is an important bill, and I urge all of my colleagues to join me in this crucial effort to mitigate the drastic effects of such an educational gap and the effects it is already having.

Mrs. KIM of California. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I thank Ms. HOULAHAN for this important legislation that she is introducing. Education lays the foundation for future prosperity and stability. I am deeply concerned by the impact this pandemic is having on school children, particularly amongst the vulnerable communities facing conflict and refugees who are already experiencing barriers to educational access.

We must understand the full scope of these challenges in order to address programs accordingly and ensure effective use of our funds. So I urge my colleagues to support this measure, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. MEEKS. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Education is recognized as the surest path to economic mobility. However, over the past year and a half, the COVID-19 pandemic has rattled educational systems across the world, presented challenges unlike anything we have seen in the last 100 years since we had the last global pandemic, and it jeopardizes access to education for students around the world.

While some students and educators quickly adapted and overcame these challenges, the widespread disruptions caused by the pandemic will invariably have lasting impacts on communities at home and abroad. The Global Learning Loss Assessment Act of 2021 will allow us to better understand the effect the pandemic has had on global learning, and also find ways to help get students back on the path to continued learning and future success.

I know from my home city that the lack of availability of educational school buildings and lack of dialogue and conversations with other students in the classroom has hurt them. We need to evaluate and make sure what needs to be done so they can make up that time and continue the path to success because our Nation here in the United States and in the countries around the world are dependent upon it so that we can have a better tomorrow.

That is why I thank Ms. HOULAHAN for her bill, along with Mr. FITZPATRICK, working with the minority, Ranking Member MCCAUL, coming together because we understand the significance and importance of education. I hope all of my colleagues will join in supporting this bill, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from New York (Mr. MEEKS) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 1500, as amended.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds being in the affirmative, the ayes have it.

Mrs. GREENE of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to section 3(s) of House Resolution 8, the yeas and nays are ordered.

Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, further proceedings on this motion are postponed.

URGING THE ADMINISTRATION TO FACILITATE ASSISTANCE IN RESPONSE TO THE DEVASTATING IMPACT OF COVID-19 IN INDIA

Mr. MEEKS. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the resolution (H. Res. 402) urging the Administration to facilitate assistance in response to the devastating impact of COVID-19 in India, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the resolution.

The text of the resolution is as follows:

H. RES. 402

Whereas in March 2021, a second wave of Coronavirus Disease 2019 (commonly referred to as "COVID-19") infectious began to surge in India, overwhelming health care workers, hospitals, and crematoriums throughout the country;

Whereas testing results indicate India is seeing more than 340,000 new daily infections and upward of 4,000 deaths a day, though public health experts believe case rates are higher;

Whereas cases have surged in neighboring countries such as Nepal and other countries in the area remain highly vulnerable to renewed spikes in cases;

Whereas the deadly COVID-19 outbreak in India is a global problem that requires a coordinated global response;

Whereas in the spring of 2020, when the United States was in the midst of a devastating spike in COVID-19 cases, India lifted its export ban on certain therapeutics in response to a request by the United States Government;

Whereas India's pharmaceutical industry is a vital part of the global solution to the pandemic, especially for much of Asia, Africa, and Latin America, and is the world's biggest producer of COVID vaccines having exported 66.36 million doses to 93 countries, including to United Nations personnel and, accounting for over half of global vaccine manufacturing;

Whereas due to India's critical importance in global vaccine supply chains, an increase in domestic vaccine demand as a result of the surge of COVID-19 cases within India is of global concern;

Whereas in response to the crisis in India, the Biden administration took quick action to deliver urgently needed supplies to India, including oxygen support, oxygen concentrators, personal protective equipment (PPE), raw materials for vaccine, rapid diagnostic tests, and therapeutics, and is a testament to the historic record of United States-India health cooperation dating more than seven decades;

Whereas the United States private sector has worked to generously support relief efforts in India including by working to deliver 1,000 ventilators and 25,000 oxygen concentrators to health care facilities across India;

Whereas many countries around the world have also sent medical assistance to India to help the country defeat this devastating wave of the COVID-19 pandemic;

Whereas as the United States vaccine supply for the American people is secured, it is important for the United States to continue to ramp up its efforts, working with the private sector and all possible partners, to expand vaccine manufacturing and distribution worldwide; and

Whereas United States support for India to help beat back this latest coronavirus wave

is in the United States national interest as the pandemic will not end anywhere until it ends everywhere: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the House of Representatives—

(1) urges the Administration to facilitate private, in-kind medical supply donations to India and deliver additional, urgently needed medical supplies, including oxygen generator plants and a cryogenic oxygen tanker and containers;

(2) urges the Administration to facilitate assistance as needed to neighboring countries, including Nepal, that are facing the spread of COVID-19 and working with partners around the world to address the virus; and

(3) calls on the United States private sector and the Indian-American community to continue their unprecedented and generous efforts at procuring medical supplies for the Indian response during this time of need, building upon contributions to date, standing with the people of India as they collectively work to stem the spread of COVID-19.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from New York (Mr. MEEKS) and the gentlewoman from California (Mrs. KIM) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New York.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. MEEKS. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on H. Res. 402, as amended.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from New York?

There was no objection.

Mr. MEEKS. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H. Res. 402, urging the administration to facilitate assistance in response to the devastating impact of COVID-19 in India.

This resolution, introduced by my good friend Representative SHERMAN, is an excellent measure that solidifies this body's already strong, bipartisan support for the people of India as they recover from this most recent wave of COVID-19 infections.

It urges the administration to continue facilitating much-needed assistance. We are all saddened by the devastating impact COVID-19 has had on the Indian people. Beginning in March 2021, India started to experience a surge of COVID-19 cases and deaths. Indians from all backgrounds, young and old, urban and rural have been touched by this pandemic.

With infections rising at an alarming rate, the healthcare system struggled to provide care to all of those infected, and medical supply shortages were reported across the country.

Harrowing images depicted the devastation that COVID-19 caused, from family members looking for hospital beds and medical supplies, to funeral pyres burning nonstop, 24 hours a day, to ensure the last rites of the many people who have passed.

I am pleased with the Biden administration's swift response, sending much-