

116TH CONGRESS  
2D SESSION

# H. R. 1771

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## AN ACT

To require consultations on reuniting Korean Americans with  
family members in North Korea.

1       *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*  
2   *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

1 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

2       This Act may be cited as the “Divided Families Re-  
3 unification Act”.

4 **SEC. 2. CONSULTATIONS ON REUNITING KOREAN AMERI-**  
5 **CANS WITH FAMILY MEMBERS IN NORTH**  
6 **KOREA.**

7       (a) FINDINGS.—Congress makes the following find-  
8 ings:

9           (1) The division of the Korean Peninsula into  
10 South Korea and North Korea separated thousands  
11 of Koreans from family members.

12           (2) Since the signing of the Agreement Con-  
13 cerning a Military Armistice in Korea, signed at  
14 Panmunjom July 27, 1953 (commonly referred to as  
15 the “Korean War Armistice Agreement”), there has  
16 been little to no contact between Korean Americans  
17 and family members who remain in North Korea.

18           (3) North Korea and South Korea first agreed  
19 to reunions of divided families in 1985 and have  
20 since held 21 face-to-face reunions and multiple  
21 video link reunions.

22           (4) Those reunions have subsequently given ap-  
23 proximately 24,500 Koreans the opportunity to  
24 briefly reunite with loved ones.

1           (5) The most recent family reunions between  
2       North Korea and South Korea took place in August  
3       2018 and did not include any Korean Americans.

4           (6) The United States and North Korea do not  
5       maintain diplomatic relations and certain limitations  
6       exist on Korean Americans participating in face-to-  
7       face reunions.

8           (7) According to the most recent census, more  
9       than 1,700,000 people living in the United States  
10      are of Korean descent.

11          (8) The number of first generation Korean and  
12      Korean American family members divided from fam-  
13      ily members in North Korea is rapidly diminishing  
14      given the advanced age of those family members.  
15      More than 3,000 elderly South Koreans die each  
16      year without having been reunited with their family  
17      members.

18          (9) Many Korean Americans with family mem-  
19      bers in North Korea have not seen or communicated  
20      with those family members in more than 60 years.

21          (10) The inclusion of Korean American families  
22      in the reunion process would constitute a positive  
23      humanitarian gesture by the Government of North  
24      Korea.

1           (11) Section 1265 of the National Defense Au-  
2           thorization Act for Fiscal Year 2008 (Public Law  
3           110–181; 122 Stat. 407) required the President to  
4           submit to Congress a report on “efforts, if any, of  
5           the United States Government to facilitate family re-  
6           unions between United States citizens and their rel-  
7           atives in North Korea”.

8           (12) The position of Special Envoy on North  
9           Korean Human Rights Issues has been vacant since  
10          January 2017, although the President is required to  
11          appoint a Senate-confirmed Special Envoy to fill this  
12          position in accordance with section 107 of the North  
13          Korean Human Rights Act of 2004 (22 U.S.C.  
14          7817).

15          (13) In the report of the Committee on Appro-  
16          priations of the House of Representatives accom-  
17          panying H.R. 3081, 111th Congress (House Report  
18          111–187), the Committee urged “the Special Rep-  
19          resentative on North Korea Policy, as the senior of-  
20          ficial handling North Korea issues, to prioritize the  
21          issues involving Korean divided families and to, if  
22          necessary, appoint a coordinator for such families”.

23          (b) CONSULTATIONS.—

24                 (1) CONSULTATIONS WITH SOUTH KOREA.—

25          The Secretary of State, or a designee of the Sec-

1       retary, should consult with officials of South Korea,  
2       as appropriate, on potential opportunities to reunite  
3       Korean American families with family members in  
4       North Korea from which such Korean American  
5       families were divided after the signing of the Korean  
6       War Armistice Agreement, including potential oppor-  
7       tunities for video reunions for Korean Americans  
8       with such family members.

9               (2) CONSULTATIONS WITH KOREAN AMERI-  
10       CANS.—The Special Envoy on North Korean Human  
11       Rights Issues of the Department of State should  
12       regularly consult with representatives of Korean  
13       Americans who have family members in North  
14       Korea with respect to efforts to reunite families di-  
15       vided after the signing of the Korean War Armistice  
16       Agreement, including potential opportunities for  
17       video reunions for Korean Americans with such fam-  
18       ily members.

19               (3) NO ADDITIONAL AUTHORIZATION OF AP-  
20       PROPRIATIONS.—No additional amounts are author-  
21       ized to be appropriated to the Department of State  
22       to carry out consultations under this subsection.

23               (c) ADDITIONAL MATTER IN REPORT.—The Sec-  
24       retary of State, acting through the Special Envoy on  
25       North Korean Human Rights Issues, shall include in each

1 report required under section 107(d) of the North Korean  
2 Human Rights Act of 2004 (22 U.S.C. 7817(d)), a de-  
3 scription of the consultations described in subsection (b)  
4 conducted during the year preceding the submission of  
5 each report required under such section 107(d).

Passed the House of Representatives March 9,  
2020.

Attest:

*Clerk.*



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