

116TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

H. R. 7911

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 learning and global basic education programs.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

JULY 31, 2020

Ms. HOULAHAN introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Affairs

A BILL

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 learning and global basic education programs.

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 “Global Learning Loss
5 Assessment Act of 2020”.

6 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

7 Congress finds the following:

1 (1) Before the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (com-
2 monly referred to as “COVID-19”) pandemic began,
3 258 million children were out of school, including
4 130 million girls.

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

8 (3) Approximately 90 percent of the world’s
9 student population—over 1.7 billion children and
10 youth—have had their education disrupted by school
11 closure due to COVID-19.

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

15 (5) Up to 9.7 million children are at risk of
16 dropping out of school due to rising levels of child
17 poverty associated with the pandemic.

18 (6) School closure and remote learning is espe-
19 cially burdensome on girls, who are frequently ex-
20 pected to shoulder more household chores and re-
21 sponsibilities, and are more vulnerable to gender-
22 based violence.

23 (7) During the Ebola epidemic, nationwide
24 school closures in Sierra Leone in 2014 led to in-
25 creased instances of sexual and gender-based vio-

1 lence, teenage pregnancy, school dropout, and child
2 labor for girls.

3 (8) Over 60 percent of national distance learn-
4 ing alternatives rely exclusively on online platforms
5 but as many as 465 million children and young peo-
6 ple in these countries do not have access to the
7 internet at home, with 80 percent of students in
8 sub-Saharan Africa without such access, and an
9 even higher rate for girls.

10 (9) Distance learning tools are not always ac-
11 cessible to learners with disabilities or those with
12 complex learning needs, especially in poorer and
13 rural households.

14 (10) The economic downturn caused by the
15 COVID-19 pandemic could lead to an education fi-
16 nancing gap of \$77 billion in low- and middle-income
17 countries over the next two years.

18 (11) The economic cost of school closures could
19 be up to \$1,337 per student, which on a global scale
20 equates to approximately \$10 trillion in lost eco-
21 nomic output over the coming generation.

22 **SEC. 3. STATEMENT OF POLICY.**

23 It is the policy of the United States—

24 (1) to provide inclusive learning opportunities
25 for students and teachers, especially for the most

1 marginalized, including girls and children with dis-
2 abilities;

3 (2) to build local capacity and help countries
4 strengthen their education systems;

5 (3) to improve the delivery and quality of edu-
6 cation services;

7 (4) to improve equity and safety in education
8 services; and

9 (5) to support the return of children to school
10 who have experienced interruptions in their edu-
11 cation due to the COVID-19 pandemic and other
12 causes.

13 **SEC. 4. REPORT.**

14 (a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 90 days after the
15 date of the enactment of this Act, the Administrator of
16 the United States Agency for International Development,
17 acting through the Senior Coordinator for International
18 Basic Education Assistance and in consultation with the
19 Senior Coordinator for Gender Equality and Women’s
20 Empowerment, shall submit to the appropriate congres-
21 sional committees a report on the impact of the COVID-
22 19 pandemic on learning and global basic education pro-
23 grams.

1 (b) MATTERS TO BE INCLUDED.—The report re-
2 quired by subsection (a) shall include, at a minimum, the
3 following:

4 (1) An assessment of the magnitude of global
5 learning loss that will result from protracted school
6 closures, including the specific effects of school clo-
7 sures on marginalized children and youth, including
8 girls, minority populations, and those with disabil-
9 ities.

10 (2) Evaluations of effectiveness, cost, accessi-
11 bility, and reach of the most commonly used forms
12 of distance learning in low resource contexts.

13 (3) An overview of existing Agency programs
14 being carried out to continue learning during the
15 COVID-19 pandemic, including data on funding and
16 programmatic focus disaggregated by gender, coun-
17 try, education level, and, when practicable and ap-
18 propriate, disability.

19 (4) Identification of any gaps in reaching
20 marginalized populations, such as girls, children
21 with disabilities, or children affected by conflict and
22 crisis.

23 (5) A description of the tools and resources
24 needed for the Agency to support continued distance
25 learning interventions, safe school reopening, reme-

1 dial and accelerated learning, and reenrollment cam-
2 paigns for out-of-school children and youth.

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

5 (d) APPROPRIATE CONGRESSIONAL COMMITTEES
6 DEFINED.—In this section, the term “appropriate con-
7 gressional committees” means—

8 (1) the Committee on Foreign Affairs and the
9 Committee on Appropriations of the House of Rep-
10 resentatives; and

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

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