

110TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

S. 147

To empower women in Afghanistan, and for other purposes.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

JANUARY 4, 2007

Mrs. BOXER (for herself, Mr. BIDEN, and Mr. DODD) introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations

A BILL

To empower women in Afghanistan, 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 “Afghan Women Em-
5 powerment Act of 2007”.

6 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

7 Congress makes the following findings:

8 (1) Under the oppressive rule of the Taliban,
9 the women of Afghanistan were denied the most
10 basic human rights and fundamental freedoms, in-
11 cluding the rights to life, work, education, health
12 care, movement, expression, and religion.

1 (2) Many women who attempted to assert their
2 rights under the Taliban regime were subjected to
3 beatings and imprisonments, and many suffer from
4 the long-term consequences of such oppression.

5 (3) Women in Afghanistan have one of the
6 highest maternal mortality rates in the world, with
7 an estimated 1,600 deaths per every 100,000 live
8 births.

9 (4) Despite efforts by the United States Gov-
10 ernment and the international community to improve
11 the lives of women and girls in Afghanistan, many
12 women and girls continue to lack access to basic
13 services, including health care and education. Ap-
14 proximately 80 percent of Afghan women are illit-
15 erate.

16 (5) Today, women and girls in Afghanistan still
17 face oppression resulting from violence and intima-
18 tion by the Taliban, other religious extremists, and
19 militia groups within their communities. In recent
20 months, there has been a significant increase in the
21 number of attacks against girls' schools in an at-
22 tempt to prevent women and girls from regaining
23 their rights and freedoms.

24 (6) According to the United States Commission
25 on International Religious Freedom, the absence of

1 clear protections for the right to freedom of religion
2 or belief for individual Afghan citizens has resulted
3 in a growing number of criminal prosecutions and
4 other official actions against individuals, including
5 women, for exercising their basic rights.

6 (7) The strengthening of institutions and other
7 actors, such as nongovernmental organizations, in
8 Afghanistan is essential to building a civil society
9 and holding the Government of Afghanistan to its
10 international obligations under the International
11 Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and other
12 international instruments to protect and ensure the
13 rights of women.

14 **SEC. 3. SENSE OF CONGRESS ON WOMEN'S RIGHTS IN AF-**
15 **GHANISTAN.**

16 It is the sense of Congress that—

17 (1) the protection of the rights of women and
18 girls in Afghanistan and their full participation in
19 the reestablishment of democracy is essential to the
20 reconstruction of a stable and democratic Afghani-
21 stan, and to achieve such a reconstruction, the
22 United States Government must continue to commit
23 resources to advance the rights of women through-
24 out Afghanistan;

1 (2) the United States Government should pro-
 2 vide strong support for the Afghan Ministry of
 3 Women’s Affairs and the Afghan Independent
 4 Human Rights Commission, both of which were cre-
 5 ated by the Agreement on Provisional Agreements in
 6 Afghanistan Pending the Establishment of Perma-
 7 nent Governing Institutions, done in Bonn, Decem-
 8 ber 5, 2001 (commonly known as the “Bonn Agree-
 9 ment”) to remedy past violations of women’s rights
 10 and human rights and to establish institutions and
 11 programs to ensure policies that advance such
 12 rights;

13 (3) the United States Government should make
 14 it a priority to provide assistance to Afghan-led non-
 15 governmental organizations, particularly Afghan
 16 women-led nonprofit organizations; and

17 (4) grants and assistance to Afghanistan should
 18 be conditioned upon the Government of Afghanistan
 19 adhering to international standards for women’s
 20 rights and human rights, including the internation-
 21 ally recognized right to freedom of thought, con-
 22 science, and religion or belief.

23 **SEC. 4. ASSISTANCE TO WOMEN AND GIRLS.**

24 Section 103(a)(7) of the Afghan Freedom Support
 25 Act of 2002 (22 U.S.C. 7513(a)(7)) is amended—

(1) in subparagraph (A), by striking clauses (i) through (xii) and inserting the following:

“(i) to provide equipment, medical supplies, and other assistance to health care facilities for the purpose of reducing maternal and infant mortality and morbidity;

“(ii) to establish and expand programs to provide services to women and girls suffering from mental health problems, such as depression, anxiety, and posttraumatic stress disorder;

“(iii) to expand immunization programs for women and children;

“(iv) to protect and provide services to vulnerable populations, including widows, orphans, and women head of households;

“(v) to establish primary and secondary schools for girls that include mathematics, science, and languages in their primary curriculum;

“(vi) to expand technical and vocational training programs to enable women to support themselves and their families;

1 “(vii) to maintain and expand adult
2 literacy programs, including economic lit-
3 eracy programs that promote the well-
4 being of women and their families;

5 “(viii) to provide special educational
6 opportunities for girls whose schooling was
7 ended by the Taliban and who now face
8 obstacles to participating in the normal
9 education system, such as girls who are
10 now married and girls who are older than
11 the normal age for their classes;

12 “(ix) to disseminate information
13 throughout Afghanistan on the rights of
14 women and on international standards for
15 human rights;

16 “(x) to provide information and as-
17 sistance to enable women to exercise prop-
18 erty, inheritance, and voting rights, and to
19 ensure equal access to the judicial system;

20 “(xi) to provide legal assistance to
21 women who have suffered violations of
22 their rights;

23 “(xii) to increase political and civil
24 participation of women in all levels of soci-
25 ety, including the criminal justice system;

1 “(xiii) to provide information and
 2 training related to women’s rights and
 3 human rights to military, police, judicial,
 4 and legal personnel;

5 “(xiv) to provide assistance to the
 6 Ministry of Women’s Affairs and the Af-
 7 ghan Independent Human Rights Commis-
 8 sion for programs to advance the status of
 9 women; and

10 “(xv) to develop and implement pro-
 11 grams to protect women and girls against
 12 sexual and physical abuse, abduction, traf-
 13 ficking, exploitation, and sex discrimina-
 14 tion, including providing emergency shel-
 15 ters for women and girls who face danger
 16 from violence.”; and

17 (2) by restating subparagraph (B) to read as
 18 follows:

19 “(B) AVAILABILITY OF FUNDS.—For each
 20 of the fiscal years 2008 through 2010—

21 “(i) \$5,000,000 is authorized to be
 22 appropriated to the President to be made
 23 available to the Afghan Ministry of Wom-
 24 en’s Affairs for the administration and
 25 conduct of its programs;

1 “(ii) \$10,000,000 is authorized to be
2 appropriated to the President to be made
3 available to the Afghan Independent
4 Human Rights Commission for the admin-
5 istration and conduct of its programs; and

6 “(iii) \$30,000,000 is authorized to be
7 appropriated to the President for grants to
8 Afghan women-led nonprofit organizations
9 to support activities including the construc-
10 tion, establishment, and operation of
11 schools for married girls and girls’ orphan-
12 ages, vocational training and human rights
13 education for women and girls, health care
14 clinics for women and children, programs
15 to strengthen Afghan women-led organiza-
16 tions and women’s leadership, and to pro-
17 vide monthly financial assistance to wid-
18 ows, orphans, and women head of house-
19 holds.”.

20 **SEC. 5. SENSE OF CONGRESS ON ASSISTANCE.**

21 It is the sense of Congress that, in providing assist-
22 ance under section 103(a)(7) of the Afghan Freedom Sup-
23 port Act (22 U.S.C. 7513(a)(7)), as amended by section
24 4, the President should—

1 (1) condition the provision of such assistance on
2 the recipient adhering to international standards for
3 women's rights and human rights; and

4 (2) ensure that Afghan women-led nongovern-
5 mental organizations throughout Afghanistan receive
6 grants without ethnic, religious, or any other dis-
7 crimination.

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