

110TH CONGRESS  
1ST SESSION

# S. 147

To empower women in Afghanistan, and for other purposes.

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## 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

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

3           “(i) to provide equipment, medical  
4 supplies, and other assistance to health  
5 care facilities for the purpose of reducing  
6 maternal and infant mortality and mor-  
7 bidity;

8           “(ii) to establish and expand pro-  
9 grams to provide services to women and  
10 girls suffering from mental health prob-  
11 lems, such as depression, anxiety, and  
12 posttraumatic stress disorder;

13           “(iii) to expand immunization pro-  
14 grams for women and children;

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

18           “(v) to establish primary and sec-  
19 ondary schools for girls that include math-  
20 ematics, science, and languages in their  
21 primary curriculum;

22           “(vi) to expand technical and voca-  
23 tional training programs to enable women  
24 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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