

Keeping Girls in School Act H.R.4134 and S.2276

September 2022

BACKGROUND

At the height of the pandemic, 1.6 billion children were forced out of school. The World Bank estimates that 70% of 10-year-olds in lower- and middle-income countries are unable to understand a simple written text. The degree of this learning loss has caused setbacks for an entire generation, including the loss of \$21 trillion in potential lifetime earnings.

Girls are more likely than their male peers to see these setbacks become permanent if urgent action is not taken. The UN estimates that 11 million girls may not return to school because of COVID-19-related disruptions to their education. The pandemic exacerbated already existing challenges that girls face such as early and forced child marriage, gender-based violence, disproportionate care burdens and negative gender norms. Moreover, many families are falling deeper into poverty due to the impacts of the pandemic and are facing the impossible challenge of choosing to send their children, particularly their girls, to school or being able to put food on the table. These setbacks do not have become permanent.

A summary of S. 2938 is below:

H.R. 4134 / S. 2276

The Keeping Girls in School Act focuses on overcoming the challenges preventing girls from enrolling and/or staying in school. Critically, this bill does the following:

- Directs the U.S. State Department and United States Agency for International Development (USAID) to **address the challenges adolescent girls face in accessing a quality secondary education** in countries where girls are disproportionately more likely to drop out of school than boys;

- Authorizes international development projects to **improve safe, inclusive, and quality educational opportunities for girls** by combatting the challenges girls face in successfully transitioning to, remaining enrolled in, and completing secondary school.
- Requires an updated U.S. global strategy to empower adolescent girls that includes **a focus on girls' access to quality, inclusive secondary education** that is informed by consultations with relevant U.S. government and Congressional authorities, U.S. and international civil society.

QUICK STATISTICS: THE IMPACT OF QUALITY SECONDARY EDUCATION FOR GIRLS

- An extra year of secondary school boosts girls' eventual wages between 15–25%.
- For every \$1 invested in an additional year of schooling, \$10 is generated in earnings and health benefits in low-income countries and nearly \$4 in lower middle-income countries.
- If all women had a secondary education, child deaths would be cut in half, saving 3 million lives.
- A child born to a mother who can read is 50 percent more likely to survive past the age of 5.

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CO-SPONSORING

To co-sponsor the Keeping Girls in School Act and fight poverty and promote global stability, please contact Shir Attias Shir.Attias@mail.house.gov in Representative Frankel's office or Caitriona Rafferty caitriona.rafferty@mail.house.gov in Representative Waltz's office. In the Senate, please contact Anna Dietderich with Senator Murkowski Anna_Dietderich@murkowski.senate.gov or Daisy Bledsoe-Herring, with Senator Shaheen Daisy_Bledsoe-Herring@shaheen.senate.gov.