

116TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

S. 3395

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

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

MARCH 5, 2020

Ms. HIRONO (for herself and Mr. SULLIVAN) introduced the following bill;
which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations

A BILL

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,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Korean War Divided
5 Families Reunification Act”.

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

9 (a) FINDINGS.—Congress makes the following find-
10 ings:

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

4 (2) Since the signing of the Agreement Con-
5 cerning a Military Armistice in Korea, signed at
6 Panmunjom July 27, 1953 (commonly referred to as
7 the “Korean War Armistice Agreement”), there has
8 been little to no contact between Korean Americans
9 and family members who remain in North Korea.

10 (3) North Korea and South Korea first agreed
11 to reunions of divided families in 1985 and have
12 since held 20 face-to-face reunions and multiple
13 video link reunions.

14 (4) Those reunions have subsequently given ap-
15 proximately 22,000 Koreans the opportunity to
16 briefly reunite with loved ones.

17 (5) The most recent family reunions between
18 North Korea and South Korea took place in August
19 2018 and did not include any Korean Americans.

20 (6) The United States and North Korea do not
21 maintain diplomatic relations and certain limitations
22 exist on Korean Americans participating in face-to-
23 face reunions.

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

4 (8) The number of first generation Korean and
5 Korean American family members divided from fam-
6 ily members in North Korea is rapidly diminishing
7 given the advanced age of those family members.
8 More than 3,000 elderly South Koreans die each
9 year without having been reunited with their family
10 members.

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

14 (10) The inclusion of Korean American families
15 in the reunion process would constitute a positive
16 humanitarian gesture by the Government of North
17 Korea.

18 (11) Section 1265 of the National Defense Au-
19 thorization Act for Fiscal Year 2008 (Public Law
20 110–181; 122 Stat. 407) required the President to
21 submit to Congress a report on “efforts, if any, of
22 the United States Government to facilitate family re-
23 unions between United States citizens and their rel-
24 atives in North Korea”.

1 (12) The position of Special Envoy on North
2 Korean Human Rights Issues has been vacant since
3 January 2017, although the President is required to
4 appoint a Senate-confirmed Special Envoy to fill this
5 position in accordance with section 107 of the North
6 Korean Human Rights Act of 2004 (22 U.S.C.
7 7817).

8 (13) In the report of the Committee on Appro-
9 priations of the House of Representatives accom-
10 panying H.R. 3081, 111th Congress (House Report
11 111–187), the Committee urged “the Special Rep-
12 resentative on North Korea Policy, as the senior of-
13 ficial handling North Korea issues, to prioritize the
14 issues involving Korean divided families and to, if
15 necessary, appoint a coordinator for such families”.

16 (b) CONSULTATIONS REQUIRED.—

17 (1) CONSULTATIONS WITH SOUTH KOREA.—

18 The Secretary of State, or a designee of the Sec-
19 retary, shall consult with officials of South Korea, as
20 appropriate, on potential opportunities to reunite
21 Korean American families with family members in
22 North Korea from which such Korean American
23 families were divided after the signing of the Korean
24 War Armistice Agreement, including potential oppor-

1 tunities for video reunions for Korean Americans
2 and their family members in North Korea.

3 (2) CONSULTATIONS WITH KOREAN AMERI-
4 CANS.—The Special Envoy on North Korean Human
5 Rights Issues of the Department of State shall regu-
6 larly consult with representatives of Korean Ameri-
7 cans with family members in North Korea with re-
8 spect to efforts to reunite families divided after the
9 signing of the Korean War Armistice Agreement, in-
10 cluding potential opportunities for video reunions for
11 Korean Americans and their family members in
12 North Korea.

13 (3) NO ADDITIONAL AUTHORIZATION OF AP-
14 PROPRIATIONS.—No additional amounts are author-
15 ized to be appropriated to the Department of State
16 to carry out consultations under this subsection.

17 (c) ADDITIONAL MATTER IN REPORT.—The Sec-
18 retary of State, acting through the Special Envoy on
19 North Korean Human Rights Issues, shall include, in each
20 report required under section 107(d) of the North Korean
21 Human Rights Act of 2004 (22 U.S.C. 7817(d)), a de-
22 scription of the consultations described in subsection (b)
23 conducted during the year preceding the submission of
24 each report required under such section 107(d).

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