

116TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

S. 2320

To make improvements to the conduct of United States foreign policy through a change in the supervision of the Peace Corps and transferring it from the status of “independent agency” to a subordinate agency within the Department of State, and for other purposes.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

JULY 30, 2019

Mr. SCOTT of Florida introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations

A BILL

To make improvements to the conduct of United States foreign policy through a change in the supervision of the Peace Corps and transferring it from the status of “independent agency” to a subordinate agency within the Department of State, 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 “Peace Corps Mission
5 Accountability Act”.

6 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS; SENSE OF CONGRESS.**

7 (a) FINDINGS.—Congress finds the following:

1 (1) According to section 2 of the Peace Corps
2 Act (22 U.S.C. 2501), the Peace Corps, which was
3 established by Congress in 1961, was intended “to
4 promote world peace and friendship through a Peace
5 Corps, which shall make available to interested coun-
6 tries and areas men and women of the United States
7 qualified for service abroad and willing to serve,
8 under conditions of hardship if necessary, to help
9 the peoples of such countries and areas in meeting
10 their needs for trained manpower, particularly in
11 meeting the basic needs of those living in the poorest
12 areas of such countries, and to help promote a better
13 understanding of the American people on the part of
14 the peoples served and a better understanding of
15 other peoples on the part of the American people.”.

16 (2) The Peace Corps plays a role in imple-
17 menting aspects of United States foreign policy like
18 any taxpayer funded agency of the executive branch
19 involved in foreign policy.

20 (3) The Peace Corps is not an advisory agency,
21 but implements aspects of United States foreign pol-
22 icy through its personnel, particularly volunteers
23 who serve in foreign countries representing the
24 United States Government’s mission “to promote
25 world peace and friendship.”.

1 (4) Section 2A of the Peace Corps Act (22
2 U.S.C. 2501–1) transferred the Peace Corps from
3 the ACTION Agency and established it as an inde-
4 pendent agency within the executive branch, begin-
5 ning on December 29, 1981. Since that date, execu-
6 tive orders have required the Director of the Peace
7 Corps to report to the President and have given the
8 Secretary of State authority over and responsibility
9 for Peace Corps activities.

10 (b) SENSE OF CONGRESS.—It is the sense of Con-
11 gress that—

12 (1) the current position of the Peace Corps as
13 an independent agency in the executive branch
14 charged with implementing aspects of United States
15 foreign policy, while being subject to the Secretary
16 of State’s “continuous supervision and general direc-
17 tion of the programs . . . to the end that such pro-
18 grams are effectively integrated both at home and
19 abroad and the foreign policy of the United States
20 is best served”, creates a problem of management
21 detrimental to the foreign policy goals of the United
22 States Government; and

23 (2) since determining in which countries the
24 Peace Corps should work and the volunteers’ activi-
25 ties in those countries are components of United

1 States foreign policy, the Secretary of State, who is
 2 responsible for implementing United States foreign
 3 policy, should have direct and clear control over the
 4 Peace Corps, including the Director of the Peace
 5 Corps, in order to coordinate the Peace Corps' work
 6 with the overall foreign policy goals of the United
 7 States Government.

8 **SEC. 3. TRANSFER OF PEACE CORPS TO DEPARTMENT OF**
 9 **STATE.**

10 (a) IN GENERAL.—Section 2A of the Peace Corps
 11 Act (22 U.S.C. 2501–1) is amended to read as follows:

12 **“SEC. 2A. PEACE CORPS AS SUBORDINATE AGENCY WITHIN**
 13 **THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE.**

14 “The Peace Corps shall be a subordinate agency
 15 within the Department of State.”.

16 (b) DIRECTOR.—Section 4 of the Peace Corps Act
 17 (22 U.S.C. 2503) is amended—

18 (1) in subsection (a), by striking “President”
 19 and inserting “Secretary of State”;

20 (2) in subsection (b)—

21 (A) by striking “The President may exer-
 22 cise any functions vested in him by this Act”
 23 and inserting “The Secretary of State may
 24 carry out the duties under this Act”;

1 (B) by striking “he” and inserting “the
2 Director”;

3 (C) by striking “his” and inserting “the
4 Director’s”; and

5 (D) by adding at the end the following:
6 “The Director of the Peace Corps shall report
7 directly to the Secretary of State.”;

8 (3) in subsection (c)—

9 (A) in paragraph (2), by striking “The
10 President” and inserting “The Secretary of
11 State”; and

12 (B) in paragraph (3), by striking “Under
13 the direction of the President the Secretary”
14 and inserting “The Secretary”.

15 (c) BUDGET.—The budget of the Peace Corps shall
16 be incorporated into the overall budget of the Department
17 of State, with the Secretary of State authorized to expend
18 amounts appropriated to the Peace Corps.

19 (d) PEACE CORPS PROGRAMS IN CHINA.—Not later
20 than September 30, 2020, the Peace Corps shall terminate
21 any Peace Corps programs operating in China.

22 (e) PROHIBITION ON PEACE CORPS OPERATIONS IN
23 CERTAIN COUNTRIES.—The Peace Corps may not operate
24 in any country that is hostile to the national security inter-

1 ests of the United States, as determined by the Secretary
2 of State.

3 (f) ANNUAL REPORTS.—The Secretary of State shall
4 submit an annual report to Congress that—

5 (1) describes the programs and placement of
6 Peace Corps volunteers around the world;

7 (2) includes a justification of the placement and
8 presence of Peace Corps volunteers in each country;
9 and

10 (3) describes how such placements and presence
11 furthers the interests of the United States and is not
12 contrary to the national security interests of the
13 United States.

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