

.....  
(Original Signature of Member)

117TH CONGRESS  
1ST SESSION

# H. R.

To ensure that the United States diplomatic workforce at all levels reflects the diverse composition of the United States, and for other purposes.

---

## IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Ms. BASS introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on \_\_\_\_\_

---

# A BILL

To ensure that the United States diplomatic workforce at all levels reflects the diverse composition of the United States, 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 “Represent America  
5 Abroad Act of 2021”.

6 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

7 Congress finds the following:

1           (1) As the United States becomes more racially  
2           and ethnically diverse, the Department of State and  
3           the United States Agency for International Develop-  
4           ment (USAID) must continue to invest in policies to  
5           recruit, retain, and develop the best and brightest  
6           from the full spectrum of American society in order  
7           to be better positioned to advance United States in-  
8           terests abroad.

9           (2) Foreign Service officers are America's face  
10          to the world. Thus, the workforce must represent the  
11          United States commitment to inclusion and diversity  
12          in order to effectively advance American values on  
13          the world stage.

14          (3) The Department of State and USAID must  
15          embrace policies that recruit professionals from the  
16          broadest possible pool of talent and retain them in  
17          order to significantly increase diversity in the For-  
18          eign Service. Timely action to increase diversity at  
19          the mid-levels is crucial, as it takes approximately  
20          nine years for an entry level Foreign Service officer  
21          (class 6, 5, 4) to rise to the mid-ranks of the For-  
22          eign Service (class 3, 2, or 1).

23          (4) February and June 2020 reports by the  
24          Government Accountability Office found barriers to  
25          a diverse and inclusive workforce within the ranks of

1 the Foreign Service, especially at the mid-career and  
2 senior levels. Individuals who are racial or ethnic mi-  
3 norities comprise only 24 percent at the Department  
4 of State and 27 percent at USAID. At the executive  
5 level, individuals who are racial or ethnic minorities  
6 comprise only 13 percent at the Department of  
7 State and 17 percent at USAID. This means that  
8 the leadership is the least diverse level within the  
9 Foreign Service.

10 (5) In the past, Secretaries of State have ac-  
11 knowledged the lack of workforce diversity and  
12 pledged to take concrete steps to address the prob-  
13 lem. In 2017, then-Secretary of State Rex Tillerson  
14 recognized a great diversity gap in the Department  
15 of State and former Secretary of State John Kerry  
16 noted that in order to represent the United States,  
17 the Department of State must have a workforce that  
18 reflects the rich composition of its citizenry. Yet  
19 there has been no concrete plan to address the lack  
20 of diversity at the mid-career and senior levels.

21 (6) USAID has previously identified under-rep-  
22 resentation of specific groups in its workforce, but  
23 staffing gaps, partly due to a lack of senior leader-  
24 ship attention, prevent the agency from adequately  
25 addressing the issue.

1           (7) Congress authorized the creation of a 3-year  
2 lateral entry pilot project under section 404 of the  
3 Department of State Authorities Act, Fiscal Year  
4 2017 (Public Law 114–323; 130 Stat. 1928) to  
5 bring highly qualified individuals with special skills,  
6 which the Department may lack, into the Foreign  
7 Service at the mid-career level. Such a project would  
8 not only allow the Foreign Service to supplement its  
9 work force with those possessing complementary and  
10 needed skills, but it would also serve as an avenue  
11 to diversify the mid-level and senior ranks of the  
12 Foreign Service. Yet, more than three years later,  
13 the Department has failed to comply with the law.

14 **SEC. 3. DECLARATION OF NATIONAL INTEREST; STATE-**  
15 **MENT OF POLICY.**

16       (a) DECLARATION OF NATIONAL INTEREST.—Con-  
17 gress declares that it is in the national interest of the  
18 United States to ensure that the members of the United  
19 States Foreign Service workforce be representative of the  
20 American people.

21       (b) STATEMENT OF POLICY.—It shall be the policy  
22 of the Department of State and of the United States  
23 Agency for International Development—

1 (1) to strengthen the Foreign Service workforce  
2 by bolstering the diversity of those who represent  
3 Americans abroad;

4 (2) to treat the people of the Foreign Service  
5 as its primary asset, and as such, hold as a central  
6 tenet making strides in increasing minority represen-  
7 tation at all levels of the Foreign Service workforce  
8 to secure the country's national interests; and

9 (3) in accordance with the Foreign Service Act  
10 of 1980, to attract highly qualified, mid-career pro-  
11 fessionals who are also American minorities, through  
12 a pathway program for entry into the Foreign Serv-  
13 ice.

14 **SEC. 4. AUTHORIZATION.**

15 (a) MODIFICATION OF LATERAL ENTRY FOREIGN  
16 SERVICE PROGRAM.—Section 404 of the Department of  
17 State Authorities Act, Fiscal Year 2017 (Public Law 114–  
18 323; 130 Stat. 1928) is amended as follows:

19 (1) In subsection (a)—

20 (A) by striking “It is the sense of Congress  
21 that the Foreign Service” and inserting the fol-  
22 lowing: “It is the sense of Congress that—  
23 “(1) the Foreign Service”;

24 (B) by striking the period at the end and  
25 inserting “; and”; and

1 (C) by adding at the end the following:

2 “(2) the lateral entry pilot program authorized  
3 under this section should be an avenue for the For-  
4 eign Service to diversify its mid-level ranks by in-  
5 cluding applicants from traditionally under-rep-  
6 resented groups in terms of racial, ethnic, geo-  
7 graphic, and gender diversity, and disability sta-  
8 tus.”.

9 (2) By redesignating subsections (c) and (d) as  
10 subsections (d) and (e), respectively.

11 (3) By inserting after subsection (b) the fol-  
12 lowing:

13 “(c) PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS.—The program au-  
14 thorized under subsection (b) shall be implemented not  
15 later than 60 days after the date of the enactment of this  
16 subsection, and the Secretary shall—

17 “(1) ensure that not less than 50 percent of  
18 program participants per year are placed in the For-  
19 eign Service; and

20 “(2) include recruitment outreach for program  
21 participation to—

22 “(A) diversity officers in the private sector;

23 “(B) all members of the Department’s civil  
24 service and recognized Department affinity  
25 groups;

1                   “(C) the civil service of other national se-  
2                   curity related Federal agencies; and

3                   “(D) professional associations.”.

4           (b) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 180 days after the  
5 date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of State  
6 shall establish a program, which shall be known as the  
7 “Represent America Mid-Career Foreign Service Entry  
8 Program” (in this section referred to as the “Program”),  
9 to be administered jointly by the Director General of the  
10 Foreign Service, the Director of Global Talent Manage-  
11 ment of the Department of State, and the Chief Human  
12 Capital Officer of the Office of Human Capital and Talent  
13 Management of the United States Agency for Inter-  
14 national Development, to identify, attract, and welcome  
15 into the Foreign Service mid-career professionals who are  
16 from minority groups.

17           (c) ELEMENTS OF PROGRAM.—

18                   (1) PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS.—The Secretary  
19 of State shall carry out the following with respect to  
20 the Program:

21                           (A) Establish and publish eligibility cri-  
22                           teria for candidates to participate in the Pro-  
23                           gram.

24                           (B) Carry out countrywide recruitment ef-  
25                           forts to attract highly qualified, mid-career pro-

1           professionals from minority groups, such as at and  
2           through the following:

3                   (i) Community agencies and organiza-  
4                   tions.

5                   (ii) Faith-based organizations.

6                   (iii) Community events.

7                   (iv) Professional associations.

8                   (v) Colleges and universities, including  
9                   historically Black colleges and universities  
10                  and other minority-serving institutions  
11                  such as Hispanic-serving institutions,  
12                  Asian American and Native American Pa-  
13                  cific Islander-serving institutions, Amer-  
14                  ican Indian Tribally controlled colleges and  
15                  universities, Alaska Native and Native Ha-  
16                  waiian-serving institutions, Tribal colleges  
17                  and universities, Predominantly Black In-  
18                  stitutions, and Native American-serving,  
19                  Nontribal institutions.

20                  (vi) Diplomats in residence.

21                  (vii) Job fairs.

22                  (viii) Newspaper/magazines/journals.

23                  (ix) Radio stations and programs.

24                  (x) Websites, webcasts, podcasts, and  
25                  other online channels.

1 (C) Recruit eligible candidates for the Pro-  
2 gram.

3 (D) Develop a structured program that in-  
4 cludes as part of the initial training, a class or  
5 module that specifically prepares participants  
6 for life in the Foreign Service, including con-  
7 veying to such participants essential elements of  
8 the practical knowledge that is normally ac-  
9 quired during a Foreign Service Officer's initial  
10 assignments.

11 (E) Include appropriate mentorship and  
12 other career development opportunities, such as  
13 leadership training, for Program participants.

14 (2) OVERALL QUALIFICATIONS.—In recruiting,  
15 training, and assigning members of the Program,  
16 the Secretary of State should seek highly qualified  
17 minority individuals who are mid-career profes-  
18 sionals—

19 (A) with diverse work experience who have  
20 capabilities, insights, techniques, and experi-  
21 ences that would serve to enrich the Foreign  
22 Service workforce and empower it to perform  
23 more effectively;

24 (B) with demonstrated knowledge of, experi-  
25 ence with, and interest in United States for-

1           eign policy and national security and inter-  
2           national affairs, including knowledge of the af-  
3           fairs, cultures, and languages of other coun-  
4           tries;

5           (C) with demonstrable leadership skills and  
6           the potential for further growth;

7           (D) that demonstrate a track record of col-  
8           laboration, team-building, and stakeholder man-  
9           agement skills;

10          (E) with demonstrated capacity for critical  
11          thinking and analytical skills, including the  
12          ability to synthesize information into clear and  
13          concise recommendations;

14          (F) with strategic thinking, and ability to  
15          solve complex problems;

16          (G) with flexibility, adaptability, and deter-  
17          mination; and

18          (H) who are United States citizens with  
19          worldwide service availability and who are able  
20          to obtain appropriate security and medical  
21          clearances.

22          (d) **ADVANCEMENT FROM PROGRAM.**—Candidates  
23          who are accepted into the Program in accordance with the  
24          qualifications and requirements of this section shall have  
25          the opportunity to advance to the Foreign Service oral as-

1 sessment for potential entry as the appropriate class of  
2 mid-level Foreign Service officer in accordance with the  
3 candidate's professional qualifications.

4 (e) MID-CAREER PROFESSIONAL DEFINED.—For  
5 purposes of the Program, the term “mid-career profes-  
6 sional” means an individual who has the skills and experi-  
7 ence to serve as a mid-level Foreign Service officer (class  
8 3, 2, or 1) and who meets any of the following criteria,  
9 consistent with the merit-based principles and core pre-  
10 cepts set forth in the Foreign Affairs Manual and Hand-  
11 book and in accordance with applicable requirements of  
12 the Foreign Service Act of 1980:

13 (1) An individual with at least eight years of  
14 professional experience and a bachelor's degree from  
15 an accredited college or university in selected fields  
16 of study representing the needs of the Department  
17 of State, including public policy, public administra-  
18 tion, international law, international relations, polit-  
19 ical science, foreign languages, business administra-  
20 tion, economics, history, sociology, geography, social  
21 or cultural anthropology, statistics, or the human-  
22 ities.

23 (2) An individual with at least seven years of  
24 professional experience and a master's degree from  
25 an accredited college or university in selected fields

1 of study representing the needs of the Department  
2 of State, including any field specified in paragraph  
3 (1).

4 (3) An individual with at least five years of pro-  
5 fessional experience and doctoral degree from an ac-  
6 credited college or university in selected fields of  
7 study representing the needs of the Department of  
8 State, including any field specified in paragraph (1).

9 (f) REPORTS.—

10 (1) INITIAL REPORT.—Not later than 180 days  
11 after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Sec-  
12 retary of State shall submit to the Committee on  
13 Foreign Affairs of the House of Representatives and  
14 the Committee on Foreign Relations of the Senate  
15 a report on a plan to establish the Program.

16 (2) ANNUAL UPDATE.—Not later than one year  
17 after the submission of the report required under  
18 paragraph (1) and annually thereafter, the Secretary  
19 of State shall submit to the Committee on Foreign  
20 Affairs of the House of Representatives and the  
21 Committee on Foreign Relations of the Senate a re-  
22 port on the status of the Program. Each such report  
23 shall include the following information with respect  
24 to the previous year:

1 (A) The number of candidates approved  
2 for the Program.

3 (B) The number of candidates who began  
4 participating, including anonymized information  
5 on such candidates' backgrounds with respect  
6 to education and prior work experience and  
7 grade level at which the candidate entered the  
8 Foreign Service.

9 (C) A breakdown of the number of partici-  
10 pants recruited into and advancing from the  
11 Program by ethnicity and sex.

12 (D) A disaggregation by Foreign Service  
13 cone and post or mission (including identifying  
14 whether the post is hard-to-fill) assigned to  
15 each participant advancing from the Program.

16 (E) Program attrition rates and retention  
17 data, including information on how such data  
18 compares to the data reported in the most re-  
19 cent prior submission of such report.

20 (F) Information on recruiting efforts for  
21 the Program, including an outreach strategy  
22 detailing resources allocated to outreach, as well  
23 as where, how, and when outreach will be car-  
24 ried out.

- 1 (G) Information on efforts to improve the
- 2 efficacy of the Program and promote retention
- 3 of Program participants.