

# LEGISLATIVE *Analysis*

Center for Family and Human Rights

## **Keeping Girls in School Act (S.2276/H.R.4134)**

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The Act imposes a series of onerous bureaucratic controls on U.S. foreign aid policy on education with the aim of using U.S. foreign assistance for social and cultural engineering. These will be permanent changes in how foreign aid is administered that will make it harder for the executive branch to make improvements to how foreign assistance is administered when a Republican is in the White House.

**1. This Act would codify the Obama Administration’s *Global Strategy for Adolescent Girls (Global Strategy)*. The global strategy includes “sexual and reproductive health and rights” as well as “comprehensive sexuality education” as normative and programming areas for U.S. foreign aid and foreign policy to engage.**

Aside from referring to the Global Strategy in the findings [Subsection 3(10)], requiring USAID and the State Department to update it [Subsection 5(c)(3)], and calling for its application in the making of grants [Subsection 5(c)(2)], this Act requires implementation through “existing United States strategies and frameworks relevant to international basic education and gender equality” [Subsection 5(a)(2)]. This essentially codifies the Obama administration’s Strategy on Adolescent Girls and other Obama-era gender strategies that are still operative within USAID and the State Department.

**The Global Strategy is the most explicitly pro-abortion of all the gender policies launched by the Obama administration.** It refers not only to “sexual and reproductive health,” a euphemistic term understood to refer to abortion, but also “sexual and reproductive health and rights” (SRHR), which is even more contentious as it has never been defined by or accepted in the UN General Assembly.

Aside from the pro-life implications, the strategy also contains references to other controversial issues, including “comprehensive sexuality education,” LGBT issues, and the false assertion that over 225 million women in the developing world characterized as having an “unmet need” for family planning lack access to contraceptives, which is [untrue](#) in all but 5% of cases, as the Guttmacher Institute points out.

**2. The Act would introduce into federal law the PEPFAR “DREAMS (Determined, Resilient, Empowered, AIDS-free, Mentored, and Safe) Initiative.” Legislatively recognizing DREAMS is very problematic, as it would permanently mandate the integration of family planning and HIV/AIDS programs, providing a permanent funding conduit of millions of dollars annually to global abortion groups.**

Although abortion referrals are *technically* not part of DREAMS policies, abortion groups are seizing on the adolescents and girls’ policy space [to avoid the Helms Amendment and to promote abortion](#). **In fact, pro-abortion activity is systemic in this policy space and DREAMS has been described as a funding scheme for global abortion groups by personnel in the State Department.** Site visits in Africa found huge problems with implementing organizations, including corruption. Some contracts had to be terminated.

The PEPFAR data that Ambassador Birx reported on the DREAMS initiative was not substantiated. There is no transparency or public reporting regarding use of DREAMS funds making it virtually impossible to track how funds are used.

**3. The Act requires the federal government to depend on UN programs for data and the achievement of policy goals, which is highly problematic because the U.S. essentially relinquishes control over programming.**

The bill specifically requires federal agencies to design U.S. policy and measure progress “according to data collected by the UNESCO Institute for Statistics” [Subsection 5(a)].

The Global Strategy that would be codified by this law through Subsection 5(a)(2) fully integrates USAID foreign policy with international agreements like the UN Sustainable Development Goals, the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, and the agreements of the annual Commission on the Status of Women. It also requires USAID and the State Department to work through and in partnership with UN agencies and other parts of the UN system. Among the agencies specifically listed in the strategy are UNFPA and UN Women, which routinely promote abortion and partner with organizations that would be ineligible for direct U.S. funding when the Mexico City Policy/Protecting Life in Global Health Assistance is in place and enforced.

Codifying this requirement and strategy will result in making U.S. foreign policy indistinguishable from UN policy and many “partnerships” of the UN agencies with governments and the philanthropic sector. This is not how U.S. foreign assistance should be administered. U.S. foreign assistance should not be melded together with other international programs (which are not accountable to U.S. taxpayers) so that recipient countries no longer even know how programs are funded and who is ultimately responsible and accountable for success and failure.

**4. The Act implicates abortion policy. It refers to early pregnancy and motherhood as a barrier to education that must be addressed. *The Global Strategy for Adolescent Girls* includes the controversial term “sexual and reproductive health and rights” specifically.**

Unless abortion is excluded from the measures to address early pregnancy and motherhood, access to reproductive health services, including abortion for adolescent girls, will be promoted through this act. This alone should be a deal-breaker for pro-life groups.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

Remove all references to the **U.S. Global Strategy to Empower Adolescent Girls** and other global strategies.

Remove all references to the Ambassador-at-Large for Global Women’s Issues at the Department of State. This office was behind the push to sneak abortion in U.S. programming and to reinterpret Helms. It can be expected that any competence they will have in this bill will also be misused to promote abortion.

Focus the act on access to secondary education for girls on an equal basis with boys. The act should not delve into other legal, health policy, and social engineering goals, which are best addressed through diplomacy and other policy areas.

The bill should address basic human rights and not social engineering goals or “gender equality” as a social policy outcome. Rather, the focus of the act should be on ensuring girls have access to education on an equal basis with boys, based on human rights ratified by the U.S. government in the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

The term “gender equality” must be clarified to refer specifically to equality between men and women/boys and girls. Gender terminology is frequently used to include LGBTQ+ programming in foreign aid otherwise tailored to help women and girls. The phrase appears multiple times in the bill, so it must be defined to avoid an open definition of gender or replaced throughout the bill with “women and girls.”

The bill should include a requirement for U.S. programming to respect parental authority. Adolescent girls do not exist in isolation, and their schooling cannot be addressed independently of the family context. Since most adolescent girls are in the care of their parents, and since when harmful norms promote female genital mutilation and child marriage, the adolescent girl’s parents are often involved, it is surprising that this bill does not include one mention of parents.

Require an annual report to Congress with a mandatory list of all foreign sub-primes, funding amounts and program description.

Require the Siljander Amendment text in the authorization. As shown with the abuses under the DREAM program, it is essential to shield any money appropriated to implement this act from being misused to promote abortion in any circumstance.



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