

Background Doc
EDUCATION FOR ALL ACT OF 2016
H.R. 4481/S. 3256

Background

The Education for All Act, S. 3256, is a bipartisan bill introduced by Senators Marco Rubio (R-FL), Richard Durbin (D-IL), Ed Markey (D-MA), and Susan Collins (R-ME). The bill was first introduced in the House as H.R. 4481 by long-time education champions: Congresswoman Nita Lowey (D-NY), Ranking Member of the House Appropriations Committee and of the Subcommittee on State and Foreign Operations, and Congressman Dave Reichert (R-WA), Chairman of the Ways and Means Subcommittee on Trade.

The Education for All Act is an effort to reach the 263 million children and youth who are still not in school. 93.2 million of these children and youth live in sub-Saharan Africa, and a full one third live in conflict areas. Thirty percent of African youth aged 15-24 are illiterate as a result of having received little or no schooling.

Providing children with access to quality education reduces their chances of falling victim to extreme poverty, hunger, trafficking, disease and extremism. Education not only creates economic opportunities for the world's poorest people, it also contributes to global stability and prosperity.

Education for All Act

The Education for All Act would address the barriers to education that millions of children face around the world. It would also improve the quality of education for those already enrolled. Specifically, the bill requires:

- Developing a comprehensive, integrated U.S. strategy that improves educational opportunities and addresses key barriers to school attendance, retention and completion, especially for girls;
- Ensuring education services for children affected by conflict and other emergencies;
- Partnering with affected countries to strengthen their education systems to help build capacity and promote long-term sustainability;
- Engaging with key partners including other donors, civil society and multilateral education initiatives to leverage U.S. contributions to achieve a greater overall impact;
- The creation of a "Senior Coordinator" at USAID who will be responsible for the development, implementation and coordination of U.S. basic education programs;
- Requiring specific indicators and objectives with which to measure progress; and
- Improving the transparency and accountability of our basic education programs, ensuring taxpayers have the most impact for children worldwide.

Current Status

On September 7, 2016, the House of Representative passed H.R. 4481 by voice vote. The next step is for the Senate Foreign Relations Committee to either pass the House bill or take up its own, S. 3256. It is unclear which bill, the House or Senate version, will actually be considered, but any further action is expected after the election in November, 2016.

Education for All Act – Sample Letter

*****Before you start your letter, be sure to use the tracking sheet in this toolkit to find out which Senator you should be writing to. If your Senator is a sponsor or cosponsor of the bill, you'll need to amend your letter to be a "thank you" letter instead of an ask for them to cosponsor.*****

Dear Senator [NAME],

I am writing to ask that you show support for S. 3256, the bipartisan Education for All Act by signing on as a cosponsor of the bill.

The power of education is clear -- brighter futures, healthier communities, and increased economic growth for people and countries. Providing children with access to quality education reduces their chances of falling victim to extreme poverty, hunger, trafficking, disease and extremism. And yet, 263 million children worldwide remain out of school.

[INSERT PERSONAL STORY ABOUT WHY YOU'RE THANKFUL FOR YOUR EDUCATION/WHAT ACCESS TO A QUALITY EDUCATION HAS DONE FOR YOUR OR THE LIVES OF YOUR CHILDREN]

The Education for All Act is a bill that builds upon U.S. efforts that have already been made to gain universal access to a quality education for children around the world, with a particular emphasis on children with disabilities, those who live in conflict, and girls. This legislation would help reach the 263 million children who are out of school today and improve the quality of education for those already in the classroom. It would do so by strengthening partner country school systems, providing more safe learning environments, and improving teacher skills.

This legislation also improves the transparency and accountability of our basic education programs around the world, ensuring that valuable taxpayer dollars have the most impact for children worldwide.

I strongly urge you to join Senators Marco Rubio (R-FL), Richard Durbin (D-IL), Ed Markey (D-MA), Susan Collins (R-ME) and the other co-sponsors of S. 3256, and sign on as a cosponsor to this bill.

[YOUR NAME]

[YOUR ADDRESS]