

119TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

S. _____

To safeguard the integrity of the Department of State’s annual Country
Reports on Human Rights Practices, and for other purposes.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

Mrs. SHAHEEN (for herself, Mr. COONS, Mr. VAN HOLLEN, Mr. BOOKER, Mr.
MERKLEY, Mr. KAINE, Mr. SCHATZ, and Mr. WELCH) introduced the fol-
lowing bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on

A BILL

To safeguard the integrity of the Department of State’s
annual Country Reports on Human Rights Practices,
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 “Safeguarding the In-
5 tegrity of the Human Rights Reports Act of 2025”.

6 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

7 Congress finds the following:

8 (1) Around the world, a rise in democratic
9 backsliding, authoritarian practices, and armed con-

1 flict threaten the observance of internationally recog-
2 nized human rights, disproportionately impacting
3 girls, women, youth, ethnic minorities, indigenous
4 communities, LGBTQI+ persons, individuals with
5 disabilities, and other marginalized groups.

6 (2) Progress in advancing human rights must
7 be grounded in facts. The Department of State’s an-
8 nual Country Reports on Human Rights Practices
9 (“Human Rights Reports”) provides a record of the
10 state of human rights in the world. These reports
11 are an essential tool for activists who courageously
12 struggle to protect rights in communities around the
13 world, for journalists and scholars who document
14 rights violations, and for governments, including our
15 own, as they work to craft strategies to better pro-
16 tect victims of human rights violations, encourage
17 greater observance of human rights, and protect
18 United States taxpayer funding from flowing to vio-
19 lators.

20 (3) Any effort to reduce the scope or tailor the
21 content of the Human Rights Report based on polit-
22 ical considerations undermines its legitimacy and the
23 credibility of the United States as an honest pro-
24 moter of human rights. Such actions also embolden
25 authoritarians and perpetrators of human rights vio-

1 lations, threatening grave risks to the brave women
2 and men working tirelessly to advance these rights.

3 (4) Maintaining the veracity and integrity of
4 the Human Rights Report through mandatory and
5 comprehensive reporting on the full scope of inter-
6 nationally recognized human rights is critical to sus-
7 tain the value and international legitimacy of the re-
8 ports and to hold human rights violators account-
9 able.

10 **SEC. 3. STATEMENT OF POLICY.**

11 It shall be the policy of the United States—

12 (1) to reaffirm the commitment of the United
13 States to promote the observance of internationally
14 recognized human rights by all countries as a prin-
15 cipal goal of our foreign policy;

16 (2) to regularly engage with human rights de-
17 fenders, journalists, democracy advocates, victims of
18 human rights violations, and other stakeholders to
19 gather information and accounts for inclusion in the
20 Human Rights Reports; and

21 (3) to publish credible, fact-based Human
22 Rights Reports on an annual basis that cover the
23 full scope of internationally recognized human
24 rights, as required by law, and to ensure that

1 Human Rights Reports are devoid of political favor-
2 itism or targeting.

3 **SEC. 4. COUNTRY REPORTS ON HUMAN RIGHTS PRACTICES.**

4 Section 116(d) of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961
5 (22 U.S.C. 2151n(d)) is amended—

6 (1) in paragraph (2), by striking “and involun-
7 tary sterilization” and inserting “, involuntary or co-
8 ercive medical or psychological practices, and dis-
9 crimination against people in accessing maternal,
10 sexual, and reproductive health care, including ob-
11 stetric violence, involuntary or coerced abortion, in-
12 voluntary or coerced pregnancy, and coerced steri-
13 lization”;

14 (2) in paragraph (5), by inserting “whether
15 such country has facilitated the return of persons to
16 a country where they would face torture or persecu-
17 tion (refoulement) and” after “including”;

18 (3) in paragraph (11)(C), by striking “Sec-
19 retary; and” and inserting “Secretary;”;

20 (4) in paragraph (12)—

21 (A) in subparagraph (A)—

22 (i) by inserting “and freedom of ex-
23 pression” after “status of freedom of the
24 press”; and

1 (ii) inserting “or freedom of expres-
2 sion” after “in favor of freedom of the
3 press”;

4 (B) in subparagraph (B)—

5 (i) by inserting “or freedom of expres-
6 sion” after “violations of freedom of the
7 press”; and

8 (ii) by striking “and censorship” and
9 inserting “censorship and restrictions on
10 internet freedom or access to information”;
11 and

12 (C) in subparagraph (C)—

13 (i) by inserting “or freedom of expres-
14 sion” after “violations of freedom of the
15 press”;

16 (ii) in clause (i), by striking “of the
17 freedom of the press”; and

18 (iii) in clause (ii), by striking “jour-
19 nalists.” and inserting “journalists.”;

20 (5) in paragraph (13)—

21 (A) by striking “Wherever” and inserting
22 “wherever”;

23 (B) by redesignating subparagraphs (B)
24 through (E) as subparagraphs (C) through (F),
25 respectively;

1 (C) by inserting after subparagraph (A)
2 the following new subparagraph:

3 “(B) harassment or punishment of family
4 members residing in the country for alleged of-
5 fenses by a relative, including relatives forced
6 into exile or residing outside of the country for
7 fear of political persecution;” and

8 (D) in subparagraph (F), as redesignated
9 by subparagraph (A) of this paragraph, by
10 striking “occur.” and inserting “occur;” and

11 (6) by adding at the end the following new
12 paragraphs:

13 “(14) wherever applicable, a description of re-
14 strictions on freedom of movement and residence
15 within and travel to and from the country;

16 “(15) wherever applicable, whether a country
17 facilitates or maintains laws, policies, or practices
18 that create or perpetuate stateless persons or dis-
19 criminate against internally displaced persons in
20 that country;

21 “(16) wherever applicable, arbitrary or unlawful
22 interference with privacy;

23 “(17) wherever applicable, a description of seri-
24 ous and unreasonable restrictions on political par-
25 ticipation or the ability of citizens to elect public

1 representatives through free and fair elections and
2 universal and equal suffrage, including—

3 “(A) substantial interference with the free-
4 dom of peaceful assembly or association; and

5 “(B) government efforts to restrict civic
6 space and the ability of civil society, including
7 nongovernmental organizations, academia,
8 media, labor unions, and social movements, to
9 engage in public life;

10 “(18) wherever applicable, a description of seri-
11 ous government corruption and its impact on human
12 rights in the country;

13 “(19) wherever applicable, a description of laws,
14 discrimination, violence, or threats of violence tar-
15 geting members of groups, including women and
16 girls, persons with disabilities, national, racial, eth-
17 nic groups, indigenous peoples, LGBTQI+ individ-
18 uals, or vulnerable migrant populations; and

19 “(20) wherever applicable, a description of any
20 factors undermining due process or an independent
21 and impartial judiciary free of corruption and polit-
22 ical influence and whether trials are fair and public
23 and afford criminal defendants the minimum fair
24 trial guarantees recognized internationally as nec-
25 essary for a criminal defense, including—

1 “(A) whether persons have been convicted,
2 imprisoned, or detained essentially for political
3 beliefs or nonviolent acts of dissent or expres-
4 sion, particularly based on overly broad and
5 sweeping charges intended to stifle the exercise
6 of human rights and fundamental freedoms;
7 and

8 “(B) whether prison and detention center
9 conditions or mistreatment in such facilities has
10 resulted in deaths or forms of cruel, inhuman,
11 or degrading treatment and unusual punish-
12 ment.”.