

Calendar No. _____

119TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION**S. 3900**

To promote human rights, internet freedom and accountability in Iran, and
for other purposes.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

FEBRUARY 24, 2026

Mr. McCORMICK (for himself, Ms. ROSEN, Mr. CURTIS, Mrs. GILLIBRAND,
Mr. BANKS, Mr. SCHIFF, Ms. COLLINS, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, Mrs. CAPITO,
Mr. BOOKER, Mr. SULLIVAN, Mr. FETTERMAN, Mr. JUSTICE, Mr.
WARNOCK, Mr. CORNYN, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mr. ROUNDS, and Mr.
KAINE) introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred
to the Committee on Foreign Relations

_____ (legislative day, _____), _____

Reported by Mr. RISCH, with an amendment

[Strike out all after the enacting clause and insert the part printed in *italic*]

A BILL

To promote human rights, internet freedom and
accountability in Iran, 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 “Iran Human Rights,
5 Internet Freedom, and Accountability Act of 2026”.

1 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS; STATEMENT OF POLICY.**

2 (a) FINDINGS.—Congress makes the following find-
3 ings:

4 (1) For nearly five decades, the people of Iran
5 have endured brutal repression under the Govern-
6 ment of the Islamic Republic of Iran, a regime that
7 denies basic human rights, silences dissidents, and
8 responds to peaceful protest with violence.

9 (2) The people of Iran have repeatedly and cou-
10 rageously taken to the streets to demand economic
11 opportunity, human rights, dignity, and freedom.

12 (3) During the 2026 protests, the Government
13 of the Islamic Republic of Iran responded with bru-
14 tality by reportedly killing tens of thousands of peo-
15 ple and wounding thousands more, arresting tens of
16 thousands, and restricting internet access and tele-
17 phone lines.

18 (4) The people of Iran are protesting the Ira-
19 nian regime's economic mismanagement, corruption,
20 internal suppression, and unjust executions.

21 (5) Access to free expression, open information,
22 and uncensored communication are fundamental
23 human rights and critical to the survival of the Ira-
24 nian protestors.

25 (6) Thanks in part to United States-funded ef-
26 forts to support human rights and open internet ac-

1 cess, the Iranian people are consistently found to be
2 one of the most pro-American populations in the
3 Middle East.

4 (7) The inspiring 2022 Women, Life, Freedom
5 protests demanded an end to the Islamic Republic
6 and its violence, particularly against Iranian women
7 and ethnic minorities.

8 (8) The barbaric so-called “morality police” and
9 other arms of state suppression have a lengthy his-
10 tory of repressing the Iranian people’s fundamental
11 freedoms.

12 (9) The Iranian regime has engaged in system-
13 atic efforts to intimidate, harass, detain, and harm
14 political dissidents, activists, and journalists both
15 within Iran and beyond its borders.

16 (10) The people of Iran deserve the right to
17 dignity, democracy, and self-determination and to be
18 free from the brutality of the Government of the Is-
19 lamic Republic of Iran.

20 (b) STATEMENT OF POLICY.—It shall be the policy
21 of the United States—

22 (1) to recognize the right of the Iranian people
23 to freely determine, through free and fair elections,
24 the future leadership of their country;

1 (2) to facilitate the immediate expansion of un-
2 restricted internet access and civilian lines of com-
3 munication across Iran;

4 (3) to support the internationally recognized
5 human rights of Iranians and United States pro-
6 grams to assist Iranian civil society, including in
7 their credible documentation, reporting, and ac-
8 countability efforts of abuses in Iran;

9 (4) to fully enforce sanctions against regime
10 violators of internationally recognized human rights
11 and their family members, including any family
12 members and associates in the United States that
13 continue to directly or indirectly provide support to
14 the regime; and

15 (5) to work in coordination with its allies to
16 consider appropriate measures to deter further lethal
17 violence against protesters.

18 **SEC. 3. IMPROVED COORDINATION OF EFFORTS TO PRO-**

19 **MOTE INTERNET FREEDOM IN IRAN.**

20 (a) DUTIES OF THE SECRETARY OF STATE.—The
21 Secretary of State shall be the Federal official with the
22 primary responsibility for—

23 (1) promoting widespread internet freedom in
24 Iran and expanding access to information for Ira-
25 nian citizens;

1 (2) coordinating all efforts carried out by Fed-
2 eral departments and agencies that relate to digital
3 freedom initiatives in Iran; and

4 (3) serving as the principal official responsible
5 for updating and carrying out the strategy required
6 under section 414 of the Iran Threat Reduction and
7 Syria Human Rights Act of 2012 (22 U.S.C. 8754).

8 (b) UPDATES TO COMPREHENSIVE STRATEGY TO
9 PROMOTE INTERNET FREEDOM AND ACCESS TO INFOR-
10 MATION IN IRAN.—

11 (1) UPDATES.—Section 414 of the Iran Threat
12 Reduction and Syria Human Rights Act of 2012 (22
13 U.S.C. 8754) is amended—

14 (A) by striking “Not later than” and in-
15 serting “(A) INITIAL STRATEGY.—Not later
16 than”;

17 (B) by redesignating paragraphs (11) and
18 (12) as paragraphs (14) and (15), respectively;

19 (C) by inserting after paragraph (10) the
20 following new paragraphs:

21 “(11) evaluate the use of virtual private net-
22 works and direct-to-cell satellite technologies by civil
23 society and internationally recognized human rights
24 activists in Iran and develop strategies for increasing
25 the accessibility of such networks and technologies;

1 “(12) work with the Department of the Treas-
2 ury and the Department of Commerce to ensure en-
3 forcement of sanctions does not impede companies
4 providing to Iranian civilians the technology and
5 other tools necessary to access the open internet;

6 “(13) assess the ability of the Iranian regime to
7 cut off all access to the internet and develop a strat-
8 egy to circumvent internet blackouts for Iranian civil
9 society;” and

10 (D) by adding at the end of the following
11 new subsection:

12 “(b) UPDATES.—The Secretary of State, in consulta-
13 tion with the Secretary of the Treasury, the Secretary of
14 Commerce, and the heads of other Federal departments
15 and agencies as appropriate, shall review the strategy
16 under subsection (a) on an ongoing basis and update the
17 strategy as appropriate, taking into account the results
18 of such review.”.

19 (2) SUBMISSION OF FIRST UPDATES.—

20 (A) SUBMISSION.—Not later than 120
21 days after the date of the enactment of this
22 Act, the Secretary of State shall—

23 (i) review and update the strategy
24 pursuant to section 414(b) of the Iran
25 Threat Reduction and Syria Human

1 Rights Act of 2012 (22 U.S.C. 8754), as
2 added by paragraph (1); and

3 (ii) submit such updated strategy to
4 the Committee on Foreign Relations of the
5 Senate and the Committee on Foreign Af-
6 fairs of the House of Representatives.

7 (B) FORM.—The strategy under subpara-
8 graph (A) shall be submitted in an unclassified
9 form, but may include a classified annex.

10 **SEC. 4. INTERNET FREEDOM AND CENSORSHIP CIR-**
11 **CUMVENTION.**

12 (a) INTERNET FREEDOM REPORT.—

13 (1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 120 days
14 after the date of the enactment of the Act, the Sec-
15 retary of State, in consultation with the Federal
16 Communications Commission and the Department of
17 the Treasury, shall prepare and submit to the Com-
18 mittee on Foreign Relations of the Senate and the
19 Committee on Foreign Affairs of the House of Rep-
20 resentatives a report that updates and supplements
21 the report required under section 5124 of the Na-
22 tional Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year
23 2025 (Public Law 118–159).

24 (2) ADDITIONAL MATTERS TO BE INCLUDED.—

25 Updates to the strategy required in section 5124 of

1 the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal
2 Year 2025 (22 U.S.C. 8754a) shall also include the
3 following:

4 (A) An assessment of the feasibility of
5 using direct-to-cell wireless communications
6 technologies to expand internet access for the
7 people of Iran, including technical, regulatory,
8 and security considerations.

9 (B) An analysis of how drone-based plat-
10 forms, signal-jamming technologies, and related
11 countermeasures could impact the feasibility,
12 security, economics, and resilience of such di-
13 rect-to-cell wireless communications.

14 (C) A survey of terrestrial and non-terres-
15 trial telecommunications service providers cur-
16 rently active in Iran, including—

17 (i) whether such providers are state-
18 owned or state-controlled;

19 (ii) the extent of foreign participation
20 or investment in such providers;

21 (iii) the implications of such owner-
22 ship and control for communications free-
23 dom and censorship; and

24 (iv) any other relevant information to
25 assess the opportunities and risks associ-

1 ated with terrestrial and non-terrestrial
2 communications technologies in Iran.

3 (3) FORM.—The report required by paragraph
4 (1) shall be submitted in unclassified form, but may
5 include a classified annex.

6 (b) EXTENSION AND INCREASE OF AUTHORIZATION
7 FOR IRAN INTERNET FREEDOM GRANT PROGRAM.—Sec-
8 tion 5124(b)(5)(A) of the National Defense Authorization
9 Act for Fiscal Year 2025 (22 U.S.C. 8754a(b)(5)(A)) is
10 amended by inserting “and not less than \$20,000,000 for
11 each of fiscal years 2027 through 2030” after
12 “\$15,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2025 and 2026”.

13 (c) DEVELOPMENT OF INTERNET ACCESS TECH-
14 NOLOGIES.—

15 (1) IN GENERAL.—The Department of State, in
16 coordination with the Department of Defense, the
17 United States Agency for Global Media, and other
18 relevant Federal departments and agencies, shall
19 form a joint working group (referred to as the
20 “Working Group”) to support the development of
21 low-cost, easily scalable, and rapidly deployable tech-
22 nologies to counter internet shutdowns or limitations
23 on network access abroad, particularly those im-
24 posed by adversary countries, to enable populations
25 to overcome such restrictions.

1 (2) OBJECTIVES.—In carrying out the respon-
2 sibilities under subsection (a), the Working Group
3 shall prioritize the following objectives:

4 (A) Identifying and supporting the devel-
5 opment of technologies capable of overcoming
6 internet blackouts and network disruptions im-
7 posed by an adversary country and facilitating
8 internet and network access, including—

9 (i) low-earth orbit satellite internet in-
10 frastructure;

11 (ii) mesh networking solutions; and

12 (iii) portable and deployable commu-
13 nication systems.

14 (B) Virtual private networks (commonly
15 known as “VPNs”), including—

16 (i) collaborating with industry, aca-
17 demia, and relevant stakeholders to accel-
18 erate the research, development, and de-
19 ployment of such technologies;

20 (ii) conducting pilot programs and
21 field experiments to test the effectiveness
22 and scalability of developed solutions in
23 real-world settings; and

24 (iii) providing technical assistance and
25 resources to partner organizations; govern-

1 ments, and nongovernmental entities en-
2 gaged in efforts to expand internet access.

3 ~~(C) Identifying and evaluating off-the-shelf~~
4 technologies that could be rapidly procured and
5 deployed to address internet access challenges
6 in targeted regions.

7 ~~(3) COLLABORATION WITH THE FEDERAL AC-~~
8 ~~QUISITION INSTITUTE.~~—The Working Group shall
9 collaborate with the Federal Acquisition Institute to
10 leverage expertise in acquisition processes and prac-
11 tices related to carrying out the objectives under
12 paragraph ~~(2)~~ with the aim of—

13 ~~(A) integrating best practices in defense~~
14 acquisition into the research, development, and
15 deployment processes of technologies developed
16 by the Working Group to facilitate internet ac-
17 cess;

18 ~~(B) ensuring that technologies developed~~
19 by the Working Group align with acquisition
20 priorities and strategies of the Department of
21 State and the Department of Defense;

22 ~~(C) providing training and educational op-~~
23 portunities for the Working Group on acquisi-
24 tion principles, regulations, and procedures;

1 with a focus on technology development for
2 countering censorship and related restrictions;

3 (D) fostering dialogue and exchange of
4 knowledge between acquisition professionals and
5 innovation specialists to enhance the effective-
6 ness and efficiency of defense technology acqui-
7 sition related to internet access technologies;
8 and

9 (E) collaborating on the development of ae-
10 quisition strategies that prioritize the rapid ae-
11 quisition and deployment of technologies aimed
12 at countering censorship and restrictions on
13 internet access.

14 (4) REPORTING.—The Secretary of State, in co-
15 ordination with the Secretary of Defense and the
16 United States Agency for Global Media, shall submit
17 to the appropriate congressional committees an an-
18 nual report detailing the progress, challenges, and
19 outcomes of the efforts undertaken pursuant to this
20 section.

21 (5) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—
22 There is hereby authorized to be appropriated such
23 sums as may be necessary for each fiscal year 2027
24 through 2030 to carry out the activities described in
25 this subsection.

1 ~~(6) APPROPRIATE CONGRESSIONAL COMMIT-~~
2 ~~TEES DEFINED.—In this subsection, the term “ap-~~
3 ~~propriate congressional committees” means—~~

4 ~~(A) the Committee on Armed Services, the~~
5 ~~Committee on Foreign Relations, and the Com-~~
6 ~~mittee on Appropriations of the Senate; and~~

7 ~~(B) the Committee on Armed Services, the~~
8 ~~Committee on Foreign Affairs, and the Com-~~
9 ~~mittee on Appropriations of the House of Rep-~~
10 ~~resentatives.~~

11 **SEC. 5. IDENTIFICATION OF INDIVIDUALS SUPPORTING**
12 **HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS.**

13 ~~(a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 120 days after re-~~
14 ~~ceiving a written request from the chairman or ranking~~
15 ~~member of any of the appropriate congressional commit-~~
16 ~~tees regarding whether a foreign person has engaged in~~
17 ~~the conduct described in subsection (b), the President~~
18 ~~shall—~~

19 ~~(1) determine whether the foreign person has~~
20 ~~engaged in such conduct; and~~

21 ~~(2) submit to such chairman or ranking minor-~~
22 ~~ity member a written justification detailing whether~~
23 ~~the President imposed the sanctions described in~~
24 ~~subsection (c) with respect to such person.~~

1 (b) CONDUCT DESCRIBED.—The conduct described
2 in this subsection is knowingly providing material support
3 for the Iranian regime’s abuses of internationally recog-
4 nized human rights, censorship, or repression of the Ira-
5 nian people, including—

6 (1) selling, supplying, or transferring censorship
7 technology, surveillance tools, or internet shutdown
8 capabilities;

9 (2) any conduct sanctionable under part 562 of
10 title 31, Code of Federal Regulations (Iranian
11 Human Rights Abuses Sanctions Regulations); or

12 (3) any conduct sanctionable under the Global
13 Magnitsky Human Rights Accountability Act (22
14 U.S.C. 10101 et seq.).

15 (c) APPROPRIATE CONGRESSIONAL COMMITTEES DE-
16 FINED.—In this section, the term “appropriate congres-
17 sional committees” means—

18 (1) the Committee on Foreign Relations, the
19 Committee on Armed Services, and the Select Com-
20 mittee on Intelligence of the Senate; and

21 (2) the Committee on Foreign Affairs, the
22 Committee on Armed Services, and the Permanent
23 Select Committee on Intelligence of the House of
24 Representatives.

1 **SEC. 6. STRATEGY ON IRAN BROADCASTING AND HUMAN**
2 **RIGHTS ASSISTANCE.**

3 **(a) STRATEGY REQUIRED.—**

4 (1) **IN GENERAL.**—Not later than 120 days
5 after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Sec-
6 retary of State, in coordination with the Chief Exec-
7 utive Officer of the United States Agency for Global
8 Media, shall submit to the appropriate congressional
9 committees a strategy to expand and enhance
10 United States and international broadcasting efforts
11 and United States programs to support the protec-
12 tion and promotion of internationally recognized
13 human rights in Iran.

14 **(2) ELEMENTS OF THE STRATEGY.**—The strat-
15 egy required under subsection (a) shall include—

16 (A) a comprehensive review and assess-
17 ment of current United States Government and
18 international broadcasting efforts targeted at
19 Iran, including Voice of America Persian Serv-
20 ice, Radio Farda, and other relevant programs,
21 including their reach, effectiveness, and
22 vulnerabilities to Iranian regime censorship, as
23 well as United States Government efforts to
24 support internationally recognized human rights
25 and democratic civil society, including efforts to

1 assist in the credible documentation of abuses
2 of internationally recognized human rights;

3 (B) specific plans and initiatives to ensure
4 the Iranian people have reliable access to accu-
5 rate, uncensored, and unbiased news coverage,
6 including through satellite broadcasting, digital
7 circumvention tools, shortwave radio, and
8 emerging technologies;

9 (C) programs to support independent Ira-
10 nian journalists, media outlets, and citizen jour-
11 nalis, including grants for equipment, train-
12 ing, secure communication platforms, and ca-
13 pacity-building for Persian and other local lan-
14 guage media;

15 (D) programs to support and train Iranian
16 civil society;

17 (E) coordination mechanisms with inter-
18 national partners, the private sector, and dias-
19 pora communities to amplify credible inde-
20 pendent media;

21 (F) annual performance metrics and
22 benchmarks for audience reach, content impact,
23 and program outcomes; and

24 (G) a multi-year budget and resource re-
25 quirements plan to implement the strategy.

1 ~~(3) FORM.—~~The strategy required in subsection
2 ~~(a)~~ shall be transmitted in an unclassified form and
3 ~~may contain a classified annex.~~

4 ~~(b) GAO REPORT ON NEAR EAST REGIONAL DEMOC-~~
5 ~~RACY (NERD) EXPENDITURES.—~~

6 ~~(1) IN GENERAL.—~~Not later than 180 days
7 after the date of the enactment of this Act, the
8 Comptroller General of the United States shall sub-
9 mit to the appropriate congressional committees a
10 report examining Federal expenditures under the
11 Near East Regional Democracy (NERD) account
12 over fiscal years 2024 and 2025.

13 ~~(2) MATTERS INCLUDED.—~~The report shall in-
14 clude—

15 ~~(A)~~ a detailed accounting of all NERD
16 funds obligated and expended for Iran-related
17 programs, including broadcasting, media sup-
18 port, civil society assistance, and human rights
19 initiatives;

20 ~~(B)~~ an assessment of the processes used
21 for grant allocation, contractor oversight, vet-
22 ting of recipients, and measuring program out-
23 comes;

24 ~~(C)~~ an evaluation of the effectiveness of
25 such programs in advancing United States pol-

1 icy objectives, including expanding information
2 access and supporting independent media with-
3 in Iran; and

4 (D) recommendations for improving trans-
5 parency, accountability, and impact measure-
6 ment.

7 (e) FORM.—The strategy and the GAO report re-
8 quired under this section shall each be submitted in un-
9 classified form, but may include a classified annex.

10 (d) APPROPRIATE CONGRESSIONAL COMMITTEES
11 DEFINED.—In this section, the term “appropriate con-
12 gressional committees” means—

13 (1) the Committee on Foreign Relations, the
14 Committee on Armed Services, the Select Committee
15 on Intelligence, and the Committee on Appropria-
16 tions of the Senate; and

17 (2) the Committee on Foreign Affairs, the
18 Committee on Armed Services, the Permanent Select
19 Committee on Intelligence, and the Committee on
20 Appropriations of the House of Representatives.

21 **SEC. 7. CYBERSECURITY CAPACITY FOR CIVIL SOCIETY IN**
22 **IRAN.**

23 (a) TRAINING AND TOOLS.—Not later than 180 days
24 after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary
25 of State shall establish programs—

1 (1) to deliver remote or in-person cybersecurity
2 training to journalists, defenders of internationally
3 recognized human rights, and civil-society actors in
4 Iran;

5 (2) to furnish vetted open-source or commer-
6 cially available digital-safety tools, including VPN
7 services and end-to-end encrypted messaging appli-
8 cations; and

9 (3) to provide multilingual educational mate-
10 rials that warn Iranian users about regime-con-
11 trolled applications and phishing campaigns.

12 (b) REPORTING AND EVALUATION.—

13 (1) QUARTERLY METRICS.—The Secretary of
14 State shall track and, on a quarterly basis, make
15 available to the Committee on Foreign Relations of
16 the Senate and the Committee on Foreign Affairs of
17 the House of Representatives aggregate metrics on
18 the number of trainees, incident-response cases, and
19 unique users of supported digital safety tools.

20 (2) INDEPENDENT EVALUATION.—Not later
21 than 3 years after the date of the enactment of this
22 Act, the Comptroller General of the United States
23 shall submit to the appropriate congressional com-
24 mittees an evaluation of the effectiveness of the pro-
25 gram carried out under this section.

1 ~~(c) SAVINGS CLAUSE.—Nothing in this section may~~
2 ~~be construed to supersede or limit existing authority under~~
3 ~~section 404 of the Iran Threat Reduction and Syria~~
4 ~~Human Rights Act of 2012 (22 U.S.C. 8754) or any other~~
5 ~~provision of law related to internet freedom programming~~
6 ~~in Iran.~~

7 ~~(d) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There is~~
8 ~~hereby authorized to be appropriated such sums as may~~
9 ~~be necessary for each of fiscal years 2027 through 2030~~
10 ~~to carry out the activities described in this section.~~

11 **SEC. 8. RULE OF CONSTRUCTION.**

12 ~~Nothing in this Act may be construed as authorizing~~
13 ~~the use of military force.~~

14 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

15 ~~*This Act may be cited as the “Iran Human Rights,*~~
16 ~~*Internet Freedom, and Accountability Act of 2026”.*~~

17 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS; STATEMENT OF POLICY.**

18 ~~(a) FINDINGS.—Congress makes the following findings:~~

19 ~~(1) *For nearly five decades, the people of Iran*~~
20 ~~*have endured brutal repression under the Government*~~
21 ~~*of the Islamic Republic of Iran, a regime that denies*~~
22 ~~*basic human rights, silences dissidents, and responds*~~
23 ~~*to peaceful protest with violence.*~~

1 (2) *The people of Iran have repeatedly and cou-*
2 *rageously taken to the streets to demand economic op-*
3 *portunity, human rights, dignity, and freedom.*

4 (3) *During the 2026 protests, the Government of*
5 *the Islamic Republic of Iran responded with brutality*
6 *by reportedly killing tens of thousands of people and*
7 *wounding thousands more, arresting tens of thou-*
8 *sands, and restricting internet access and telephone*
9 *lines.*

10 (4) *The people of Iran are protesting the Iranian*
11 *regime's economic mismanagement, corruption, inter-*
12 *nal suppression, and unjust executions.*

13 (5) *Free expression, open information, and un-*
14 *censored communication are fundamental human*
15 *rights and critical to the survival of the Iranian*
16 *protestors.*

17 (6) *Thanks in part to United States-funded ef-*
18 *forts to support human rights and open internet ac-*
19 *cess, the Iranian people are consistently found to be*
20 *one of the most pro-American populations in the Mid-*
21 *dle East.*

22 (7) *The inspiring 2022 Women, Life, Freedom*
23 *protests demanded an end to the Islamic Republic*
24 *and its violence, particularly against Iranian women*
25 *and ethnic minorities.*

1 (8) *The barbaric so-called “morality police” and*
2 *other arms of state suppression have a lengthy history*
3 *of repressing the Iranian people’s fundamental free-*
4 *doms.*

5 (9) *The Iranian regime has engaged in system-*
6 *atic efforts to intimidate, harass, detain, and harm*
7 *political dissidents, activists, and journalists both*
8 *within Iran and beyond its borders.*

9 (10) *The people of Iran deserve the right to dig-*
10 *nity, democracy, and self-determination and to be free*
11 *from the brutality of the Government of the Islamic*
12 *Republic of Iran.*

13 (b) *STATEMENT OF POLICY.—It shall be the policy of*
14 *the United States—*

15 (1) *to recognize the Iranian people’s right to self-*
16 *determination;*

17 (2) *to facilitate the immediate expansion of*
18 *open, uncensored internet access and civilian lines of*
19 *communication for the people of Iran to communicate*
20 *domestically and with the outside world;*

21 (3) *to support the internationally recognized*
22 *human rights of Iranians and programs to assist Ira-*
23 *nian civil society, including in their credible docu-*
24 *mentation, reporting, and accountability efforts of*
25 *abuses in Iran;*

1 (4) *to fully enforce sanctions against regime vio-*
2 *lators of internationally recognized human rights and*
3 *their family members; and*

4 (5) *to work in coordination with its allies and*
5 *partners to deter the regime's violence against the Ira-*
6 *nian people.*

7 **SEC. 3. IMPROVED COORDINATION OF EFFORTS TO PRO-**
8 **MOTE INTERNET FREEDOM IN IRAN.**

9 (a) *DUTIES OF THE SECRETARY OF STATE.*—*The Sec-*
10 *retary of State is authorized to be the Federal official with*
11 *the primary responsibility for—*

12 (1) *promoting widespread internet freedom in*
13 *Iran and expanding open access to independent and*
14 *impartial information for Iranian citizens;*

15 (2) *coordinating all efforts carried out by Fed-*
16 *eral departments and agencies that relate the objec-*
17 *tives outlined in paragraph (1); and*

18 (3) *serving as the principal official responsible*
19 *for updating and carrying out the strategy required*
20 *under section 5124(a) of the National Defense Author-*
21 *ization Act for Fiscal Year 2025 (22 U.S.C. 8754a).*

22 (b) *UPDATES TO COMPREHENSIVE STRATEGY TO PRO-*
23 **MOTE INTERNET FREEDOM AND ACCESS TO INFORMATION**
24 **IN IRAN.**—

1 (1) *UPDATES.—Section 5124 of the National De-*
2 *fense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2025 (22*
3 *U.S.C. 8754a) is amended—*

4 (A) *in subsection (a)(2), by striking sub-*
5 *paragraphs (A) through (G) and inserting the*
6 *following new subparagraphs:*

7 “(A) *An evaluation of the use of virtual pri-*
8 *vate networks, centralized networks, peer-to-peer*
9 *technologies, and other emerging circumvention*
10 *tools by civil society and internationally recog-*
11 *nized human rights activists in Iran and strate-*
12 *gies for increasing open access to such networks*
13 *and technologies, prioritizing tools with dem-*
14 *onstrated effectiveness, scalability, and acceptable*
15 *user security risks in the Iran context.*

16 “(B) *An assessment of United States Gov-*
17 *ernment efforts to cultivate and expand viable*
18 *alternatives to virtual private networks, peer to*
19 *peer technology, and other emerging circumven-*
20 *tion tools.*

21 “(C) *A breakdown of any limitations or re-*
22 *strictions facing the development or deployment*
23 *of United States Government sponsored virtual*
24 *private networks, peer to peer technology, or*

1 *other emerging circumvention tools to support*
2 *internet freedom in Iran.*

3 “(D) *An assessment of the ability of the*
4 *Government of Iran to cut off all access to the*
5 *global internet in Iran, including the primary*
6 *tools and technology through which they may be*
7 *able to do so.”;*

8 *(B) by redesignating subsection (b) as sub-*
9 *section (c); and*

10 *(C) by inserting after subsection (a) the fol-*
11 *lowing new subsection:*

12 “(b) *UPDATES.—The Secretary of State and the heads*
13 *of other Federal departments and agencies as appropriate,*
14 *shall review the strategy under subsection (a) on an ongoing*
15 *basis and update the strategy as appropriate, taking into*
16 *account the results of such review.”.*

17 (2) *SUBMISSION OF FIRST UPDATES.—*

18 *(A) SUBMISSION.—Not later than 120 days*
19 *after the date of the enactment of this Act, the*
20 *Secretary of State shall—*

21 *(i) review and update the strategy pur-*
22 *suant to section 5124(a) of the National De-*
23 *fense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year*
24 *2025 (22 U.S.C. 8754a), as amended by*
25 *paragraph (1); and*

1 (ii) submit such updated strategy to
2 the Committee on Foreign Relations of the
3 Senate and the Committee on Foreign Af-
4 fairs of the House of Representatives.

5 (B) FORM.—The strategy under subpara-
6 graph (A) shall be submitted in an unclassified
7 form, but may include a classified annex.

8 (3) ADDITIONAL UPDATE.—Section 414 of the
9 Iran Threat Reduction and Syria Human Rights Act
10 of 2012 (22 U.S.C. 8754) is amended—

11 (A) by redesignating paragraphs (11) and
12 (12) as paragraphs (12) and (13), respectively;
13 and

14 (B) by inserting after paragraph (10) the
15 following new paragraph:

16 “(11) work with the relevant Federal depart-
17 ments and agencies to ensure enforcement of sanctions
18 does not impede companies providing to Iranian ci-
19 vilians the technology and other tools necessary to ac-
20 cess the open internet;”.

21 **SEC. 4. INTERNET FREEDOM AND CENSORSHIP CIR-**
22 **CUMVENTION.**

23 (a) INTERNET FREEDOM REPORT.—

24 (1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 120 days after
25 the date of the enactment of the Act, the Secretary of

1 *State, in consultation with the Federal Communica-*
2 *tions Commission and the Department of the Treas-*
3 *ury, shall prepare and submit to the Committee on*
4 *Foreign Relations of the Senate and the Committee on*
5 *Foreign Affairs of the House of Representatives a re-*
6 *port that updates and supplements the report re-*
7 *quired under section 5124 of the National Defense Au-*
8 *thorization Act for Fiscal Year 2025 (Public Law*
9 *118–159).*

10 (2) *ADDITIONAL MATTERS TO BE INCLUDED.—*
11 *Updates to the strategy required in section 5124 of*
12 *the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal*
13 *Year 2025 (22 U.S.C. 8754a) shall also include the*
14 *following:*

15 (A) *An assessment of the feasibility of using*
16 *direct-to-cell wireless communications tech-*
17 *nologies to expand internet access for the people*
18 *of Iran, including technical, regulatory, and se-*
19 *curity considerations.*

20 (B) *An analysis of how drone-based plat-*
21 *forms, signal-jamming technologies, and related*
22 *countermeasures could impact the feasibility, se-*
23 *curity, economics, and resilience of such direct-*
24 *to-cell wireless communications.*

1 (C) *A survey of terrestrial and non-terres-*
2 *trial telecommunications service providers cur-*
3 *rently active in Iran, including—*

4 (i) *whether such providers are state-*
5 *owned or state-controlled;*

6 (ii) *the extent of foreign participation*
7 *or investment in such providers;*

8 (iii) *the implications of such owner-*
9 *ship and control for communications free-*
10 *dom and censorship; and*

11 (iv) *any other relevant information to*
12 *assess the opportunities and risks associated*
13 *with terrestrial and non-terrestrial commu-*
14 *nications technologies in Iran.*

15 (3) *FORM.—The report required by paragraph*
16 *(1) shall be submitted in unclassified form, but may*
17 *include a classified annex.*

18 (b) *EXTENSION AND INCREASE OF AUTHORIZATION*
19 *FOR IRAN INTERNET FREEDOM GRANT PROGRAM.—Section*
20 *5124(c)(5)(A) of the National Defense Authorization Act for*
21 *Fiscal Year 2025 (22 U.S.C. 8754a(c)(5)(A)), as redesign-*
22 *ated by section 3(b)(1)(B), is amended by striking “each*
23 *of fiscal years 2025 and 2026” and inserting “each fiscal*
24 *year through fiscal year 2030”.*

1 (c) *DEVELOPMENT OF INTERNET ACCESS TECH-*
2 *NOLOGIES.—*

3 (1) *IN GENERAL.—The Department of State, in*
4 *coordination with the Department of Defense and*
5 *other relevant Federal departments and agencies, is*
6 *authorized to utilize existing interagency coordination*
7 *mechanisms to the maximum extent practicable, to*
8 *support the development of low-cost, easily scalable,*
9 *and rapidly deployable technologies to counter inter-*
10 *net shutdowns or limitations on network access in*
11 *Iran to enable populations to overcome such restric-*
12 *tions.*

13 (2) *OBJECTIVES.—In carrying out the respon-*
14 *sibilities under subsection (a), the Department should*
15 *prioritize the following objectives:*

16 (A) *Identifying and supporting the develop-*
17 *ment of technologies capable of overcoming inter-*
18 *net blackouts and network disruptions imposed*
19 *by the Government of the Islamic Republic of*
20 *Iran and facilitating open, uncensored internet*
21 *and network access, which could include, among*
22 *other things—*

23 (i) *mesh networking solutions; and*

24 (ii) *portable and deployable commu-*
25 *nication systems.*

1 (B) *Expanding access to and the effective-*
2 *ness virtual private networks (commonly known*
3 *as “VPNs”), including by—*

4 (i) *collaborating with industry, aca-*
5 *demia, and relevant stakeholders to accel-*
6 *erate the research, development, and deploy-*
7 *ment of such technologies;*

8 (ii) *conducting pilot programs and*
9 *field experiments to test the effectiveness*
10 *and scalability of developed solutions in*
11 *real-world settings; and*

12 (iii) *providing technical assistance and*
13 *resources to partner organizations, govern-*
14 *ments, and nongovernmental entities en-*
15 *gaged in efforts to expand uncensored inter-*
16 *net access.*

17 (C) *Identifying and evaluating off-the-shelf*
18 *technologies that could be rapidly procured and*
19 *deployed to address internet access challenges in*
20 *targeted regions.*

21 (D) *Ensuring that any technology sup-*
22 *ported under this subsection is assessed for user*
23 *safety, detectability by hostile governments, cy-*
24 *bersecurity vulnerabilities, data protection, sup-*
25 *ply-chain risks, sanctions and export-control*

1 *compliance, and risk of diversion to the Govern-*
2 *ment of Iran, the Islamic Revolutionary Guard*
3 *Corps, or sanctioned persons or entities.*

4 (3) *COLLABORATION.—The Department should*
5 *collaborate with relevant Federal agencies to leverage*
6 *expertise in acquisition processes and practices re-*
7 *lated to carrying out the objectives under paragraph*
8 *(2) with the aim of—*

9 (A) *integrating best practices in acquisition*
10 *into the research, development, and deployment*
11 *processes of technologies to facilitate open, uncen-*
12 *sored internet access;*

13 (B) *providing training and educational op-*
14 *portunities on acquisition principles, regula-*
15 *tions, and procedures, with a focus on technology*
16 *development for countering censorship and re-*
17 *lated restrictions;*

18 (C) *fostering dialogue and exchange of*
19 *knowledge between acquisition professionals and*
20 *innovation specialists to enhance the effectiveness*
21 *and efficiency of acquisition related to internet*
22 *access technologies;*

23 (D) *collaborating on the development of ac-*
24 *quisition strategies that prioritize the rapid ac-*
25 *quisition and deployment of technologies aimed*

1 *at countering censorship and restrictions on*
2 *internet access; and*

3 *(E) ensuring that strategies aimed at the*
4 *rapid acquisition and deployment of such tech-*
5 *nologies account for the specific challenges pre-*
6 *sented by the country context, including*
7 *logistical barriers to large-scale technology dis-*
8 *tribution and security risks to civilians using*
9 *the technologies.*

10 (4) *REPORTING.*—*The Secretary of State shall*
11 *submit to the appropriate congressional committees*
12 *an annual report detailing the progress, challenges,*
13 *and outcomes of the efforts undertaken pursuant to*
14 *this section.*

15 (5) *APPROPRIATE CONGRESSIONAL COMMITTEES*
16 *DEFINED.*—*In this subsection, the term “appropriate*
17 *congressional committees” means—*

18 (A) *the Committee on Foreign Relations, the*
19 *Committee on Armed Services, and the Com-*
20 *mittee on Appropriations of the Senate; and*

21 (B) *the Committee on Foreign Affairs, the*
22 *Committee on Armed Services, and the Com-*
23 *mittee on Appropriations of the House of Rep-*
24 *resentatives.*

1 **SEC. 5. STRATEGY ON HUMAN RIGHTS ASSISTANCE.**

2 (a) *STRATEGY REQUIRED.*—

3 (1) *IN GENERAL.*—Not later than 120 days after
4 the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of
5 State shall submit to the appropriate congressional
6 committees a strategy to expand and enhance United
7 States programs to support the protection and pro-
8 motion of internationally recognized human rights in
9 Iran.

10 (2) *ELEMENTS OF THE STRATEGY.*—The strategy
11 required under subsection (a) shall include—

12 (A) United States Government efforts to
13 support internationally recognized human rights
14 and democratic civil society, including efforts to
15 assist in the credible documentation of abuses of
16 internationally recognized human rights;

17 (B) specific plans and initiatives to ensure
18 the Iranian people have reliable access to accu-
19 rate, uncensored, and unbiased news coverage,
20 including through digital circumvention tools,
21 shortwave radio, and emerging technologies;

22 (C) programs to support independent Ira-
23 nian journalists, media outlets, and citizen jour-
24 nalist, including grants for equipment, train-
25 ing, secure communication platforms, and capac-

1 *ity-building for Persian and other local language*
2 *media;*

3 *(D) programs to support and train Iranian*
4 *civil society;*

5 *(E) coordination mechanisms with inter-*
6 *national partners, the private sector, and dias-*
7 *pora communities to amplify credible inde-*
8 *pendent media;*

9 *(F) annual performance metrics and bench-*
10 *marks for audience reach, content impact, and*
11 *program outcomes; and*

12 *(G) a multi-year budget and resource re-*
13 *quirements plan to implement the strategy.*

14 *(3) FORM.—The strategy required in subsection*
15 *(a) shall be transmitted in an unclassified form and*
16 *may contain a classified annex.*

17 *(b) GAO REPORT ON NEAR EAST REGIONAL DEMOC-*
18 *RACY (NERD) EXPENDITURES.—*

19 *(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 180 days after*
20 *the date of the enactment of this Act, the Comptroller*
21 *General of the United States shall submit to the ap-*
22 *propriate congressional committees a report exam-*
23 *ining Federal expenditures under the Near East Re-*
24 *gional Democracy (NERD) account over fiscal years*
25 *2024 and 2025.*

1 (2) *MATTERS INCLUDED.*—*The report shall in-*
2 *clude—*

3 (A) *a detailed accounting of all NERD*
4 *funds obligated and expended for Iran-related*
5 *programs, including broadcasting, media sup-*
6 *port, civil society assistance, and human rights*
7 *initiatives;*

8 (B) *an assessment of the processes used for*
9 *grant allocation, contractor oversight, vetting of*
10 *recipients, and measuring program outcomes;*

11 (C) *an evaluation of the effectiveness of such*
12 *programs in advancing United States policy ob-*
13 *jectives, including expanding information access*
14 *and supporting independent media within Iran;*
15 *and*

16 (D) *recommendations for improving trans-*
17 *parency, accountability, and impact measure-*
18 *ment.*

19 (3) *PROTECTION OF SENSITIVE INFORMATION.*—
20 *The Comptroller General of the United States shall*
21 *ensure that the report required under this subsection*
22 *does not publicly disclose personally identifiable in-*
23 *formation, implementing-partner identities, sub-*
24 *grantee identities, operational details, cybersecurity*
25 *methods, secure communications channels, or other*

1 *information that the Secretary of State determines*
2 *could endanger individuals, compromise ongoing pro-*
3 *grams, or undermine the national security interests of*
4 *the United States. Such information may be provided*
5 *in a classified annex or otherwise protected consistent*
6 *with applicable law.*

7 *(c) FORM.—The strategy and the GAO report required*
8 *under this section shall each be submitted in unclassified*
9 *form, but may include a classified annex.*

10 *(d) APPROPRIATE CONGRESSIONAL COMMITTEES DE-*
11 *FINED.—In this section, the term “appropriate congres-*
12 *sional committees” means—*

13 *(1) the Committee on Foreign Relations, the*
14 *Committee on Armed Services, the Select Committee*
15 *on Intelligence, and the Committee on Appropriations*
16 *of the Senate; and*

17 *(2) the Committee on Foreign Affairs, the Com-*
18 *mittee on Armed Services, the Permanent Select Com-*
19 *mittee on Intelligence, and the Committee on Appro-*
20 *priations of the House of Representatives.*

21 **SEC. 6. CYBERSECURITY CAPACITY FOR CIVIL SOCIETY IN**
22 **IRAN.**

23 *(a) TRAINING AND TOOLS.—Not later than 180 days*
24 *after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary*
25 *of State should establish programs—*

1 (1) *to deliver remote or in-person cybersecurity*
2 *training to journalists, defenders of internationally*
3 *recognized human rights, and civil-society actors in*
4 *Iran;*

5 (2) *to furnish vetted open-source or commercially*
6 *available digital-safety tools, including prioritizing*
7 *VPN services and other software-based solutions that*
8 *minimize physical detection risks, including end-to-*
9 *end encrypted messaging applications; and*

10 (3) *to provide multilingual educational mate-*
11 *rials that warn Iranian users about regime-controlled*
12 *applications and phishing campaigns.*

13 **(b) REPORTING AND EVALUATION.—**

14 (1) **METRICS.**—*The Secretary of State shall*
15 *track and make available to the Committee on For-*
16 *ign Relations of the Senate and the Committee on*
17 *Foreign Affairs of the House of Representatives, in*
18 *classified form or otherwise protected form as appro-*
19 *priate, aggregate metrics on the number of trainees,*
20 *incident-response cases, and unique users of supported*
21 *digital safety tools. Such metrics shall be aggregated*
22 *and reported biannually in a manner that protects*
23 *user safety, operational security, implementing part-*
24 *ners and the integrity of supported tools and plat-*
25 *forms.*

1 (2) *INDEPENDENT EVALUATION.*—Not later than
2 3 years after the date of the enactment of this Act, the
3 Comptroller General of the United States shall submit
4 to the appropriate congressional committees an eval-
5 uation of the effectiveness of the program carried out
6 under this section.

7 (c) *SAVINGS CLAUSE.*—Nothing in this section may be
8 construed to supersede or limit existing authority under sec-
9 tion 404 of the Iran Threat Reduction and Syria Human
10 Rights Act of 2012 (22 U.S.C. 8754) or any other provision
11 of law related to internet freedom programming in Iran.

12 (d) *COORDINATION WITH EXISTING PROGRAMS.*—In
13 carrying out this section, the Secretary of State shall co-
14 ordinate with and build upon existing Iran internet free-
15 dom programs, including those established under section
16 5124 of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal
17 Year 2025 (22 U.S.C. 8754a), to avoid duplication and
18 maximize effectiveness.

19 **SEC. 7. RULE OF CONSTRUCTION.**

20 Nothing in this Act may be construed as authorizing
21 the use of military force.

22 **SEC. 8. SANCTIONS AND EXPORT CONTROL SAVINGS**
23 **CLAUSE.**

24 Nothing in this Act may be construed to authorize any
25 transaction prohibited by the International Emergency

1 *Economic Powers Act, the Iranian Transactions and Sanc-*
2 *tions Regulations, the Export Control Reform Act of 2018,*
3 *the Export Administration Regulations, or any other appli-*
4 *cable sanctions or export-control authority, except pursuant*
5 *to a general or specific license, regulatory authorization or*
6 *other authorization issued by the relevant agency.*

7 **SEC. 9. DERIVATION OF FUNDS.**

8 *Amounts made available to carry out this Act shall*
9 *be derived from amounts authorized to be appropriated or*
10 *otherwise made available to the Department of State.*