

Calendar No. _____

119TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION**S. 555**

To direct the Secretary of State to establish a national registry of Korean American divided families, and for other purposes.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

FEBRUARY 12, 2025

Mr. KAINE (for himself, Mr. CRUZ, Mr. COONS, Mr. KELLY, and Mr. RICKETTS) 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 direct the Secretary of State to establish a national registry of Korean American divided families, 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 “Korean American Di-
5 vided Families National Registry Act”.

1 **SEC. 2. NATIONAL REGISTRY OF KOREAN AMERICAN DI-**
2 **VIDED FAMILIES.**

3 (a) **IN GENERAL.**—The Secretary of State, acting
4 through the Special Envoy on North Korean Human
5 Rights Issues, the Assistant Secretary of State for Con-
6 sular Affairs, or such other individual as the Secretary
7 may designate, shall—

8 (1) identify Korean American families who wish
9 to be reunited with family members residing in
10 North Korea from which such Korean American
11 families were divided after the signing of the Agree-
12 ment Concerning a Military Armistice in Korea,
13 signed at Panmunjom July 27, 1953 (commonly re-
14 ferred to as the “Korean War Armistice Agree-
15 ment”), in anticipation of future reunions for such
16 families and family members, including in-person
17 and video reunions; and

18 (2) establish a national registry of the names
19 and other relevant information of such Korean
20 American families—

21 (A) to facilitate such future reunions; and

22 (B) to provide for a repository of informa-
23 tion about such Korean American families and
24 family members in North Korea, including in-
25 formation about individuals who may be de-
26 ceased.

1 (b) ~~AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—~~There is
2 authorized to be appropriated to the Secretary of State
3 ~~\$1,000,000 to carry out this section.~~

4 **~~SEC. 3. ACTIONS TO FACILITATE DIALOGUE BETWEEN THE~~**
5 **~~UNITED STATES AND NORTH KOREA.~~**

6 (a) ~~IN GENERAL.—~~The Secretary of State should
7 take such actions as may be necessary to ensure that any
8 direct dialogue between the United States and North
9 Korea includes progress towards holding future reunions
10 for Korean American families and their family members
11 in North Korea.

12 (b) ~~CONSULTATIONS.—~~The Secretary of State should
13 consult with the Government of the Republic of Korea,
14 as appropriate, in carrying out this section.

15 (c) ~~REPORTING REQUIREMENT.—~~

16 (1) ~~IN GENERAL.—~~The Secretary of State, act-
17 ing through the Special Envoy on North Korean
18 Human Rights Issues, shall include in each report
19 required under section 107(d) of the North Korean
20 Human Rights Act of 2004 (22 U.S.C. 7817(d)) a
21 description of the consultations described in sub-
22 section (b) conducted during the year preceding the
23 submission of the report.

24 (2) ~~ELEMENTS.—~~The reporting required under
25 paragraph (1) should include—

1 (A) the status of the national registry es-
2 tablished pursuant to section 2(a)(2);

3 (B) the number of individuals included on
4 the registry who—

5 (i) have met their family members in
6 North Korea during previous reunions; and

7 (ii) have yet to meet their family
8 members in North Korea during previous
9 reunions;

10 (C) a summary of responses by North
11 Korea to requests to hold reunions of divided
12 families; and

13 (D) a description of actions taken by
14 North Korea that prevent the emigration of
15 family members of Korean American families.

16 (d) APPROPRIATE CONGRESSIONAL COMMITTEES
17 DEFINED.—In this Act, the term “appropriate congres-
18 sional committees” means the Committee on Foreign Re-
19 lations of the Senate and the Committee on Foreign Af-
20 fairs of the House of Representatives.

21 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

22 *This Act may be cited as the “Korean American Di-*
23 *vided Families National Registry Act”.*

1 **SEC. 2. NATIONAL REGISTRY OF KOREAN AMERICAN DI-**
2 **VIDED FAMILIES.**

3 (a) *IN GENERAL.*—*The Secretary of State, acting*
4 *through the Special Envoy on North Korean Human Rights*
5 *Issues, the Assistant Secretary of State for Consular Affairs,*
6 *or such other individual as the Secretary may designate,*
7 *shall—*

8 (1) *engage, to the extent practicable, Korean*
9 *American families who wish to be reunited with fam-*
10 *ily members residing in North Korea from which such*
11 *Korean American families were divided after the*
12 *signing of the Agreement Concerning a Military Ar-*
13 *mistice in Korea, signed at Panmunjom July 27,*
14 *1953 (commonly referred to as the “Korean War Ar-*
15 *mistice Agreement”), in anticipation of future re-*
16 *unions for such families and family members, includ-*
17 *ing in-person and video reunions; and*

18 (2) *establish a private, internal national registry*
19 *of the names and other relevant information of such*
20 *Korean American families—*

21 (A) *to facilitate such future reunions; and*

22 (B) *to provide for a repository of informa-*
23 *tion about such Korean American families and*
24 *family members in North Korea, including infor-*
25 *mation about individuals who may be deceased.*

1 **(b) DISCLOSURE OF INFORMATION.**—*The Secretary of*
2 *State may enter into agreements with Korean individuals*
3 *and families, academic institutions, or other members of the*
4 *public, as appropriate, to share, in whole or in part, infor-*
5 *mation collected and housed in the database if—*

6 *(1) the United States person whose personally*
7 *identifiable information would be disclosed as a result*
8 *of an agreement has provided consent to such disclo-*
9 *sure; and*

10 *(2) the agreement outlines reasonable steps and*
11 *commitments to ensure that any information dis-*
12 *closed as a result of such agreement is—*

13 *(A) kept private and confidential; and*

14 *(B) will not be disclosed improperly to other*
15 *parties outside the agreement.*

16 **SEC. 3. ACTIONS TO FACILITATE DIALOGUE BETWEEN THE**
17 **UNITED STATES AND NORTH KOREA.**

18 **(a) IN GENERAL.**—*The Secretary of State should take*
19 *steps to ensure that any direct dialogue between the United*
20 *States and North Korea includes progress towards holding*
21 *future reunions for Korean American families and their*
22 *family members in North Korea.*

23 **(b) CONSULTATIONS.**—*The Secretary of State shall*
24 *consult with the Government of the Republic of Korea, as*
25 *appropriate, in carrying out this section.*

1 (c) *REPORTING REQUIREMENT.*—

2 (1) *IN GENERAL.*—*The Secretary of State, acting*
3 *through the Special Envoy on North Korean Human*
4 *Rights Issues, shall include in each report required*
5 *under section 107(d) of the North Korean Human*
6 *Rights Act of 2004 (22 U.S.C. 7817(d)) a description*
7 *of the consultations described in subsection (b) con-*
8 *ducted during the year preceding the submission of*
9 *the report.*

10 (2) *ELEMENTS.*—*The reporting required under*
11 *paragraph (1) should include—*

12 (A) *the status of the national registry estab-*
13 *lished pursuant to section 2(a)(2);*

14 (B) *the number of individuals included on*
15 *the registry who—*

16 (i) *have met their family members in*
17 *North Korea during previous reunions; and*

18 (ii) *have yet to meet their family mem-*
19 *bers in North Korea;*

20 (C) *a summary of responses by North Korea*
21 *to requests by the United States Government to*
22 *hold reunions of divided families; and*

23 (D) *a description of actions taken by North*
24 *Korea that prevent the emigration of family*
25 *members of Korean American families.*

1 *(d) APPROPRIATE CONGRESSIONAL COMMITTEES DE-*
2 *FINED.—In this Act, the term “appropriate congressional*
3 *committees” means the Committee on Foreign Relations of*
4 *the Senate and the Committee on Foreign Affairs of the*
5 *House of Representatives.*