

111TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 578

To address the impending humanitarian crisis and potential security breakdown as a result of the mass influx of Iraqi refugees into neighboring countries, and the growing internally displaced population in Iraq, by increasing directed accountable assistance to these populations and their host countries, facilitating the resettlement of Iraqis at risk, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

JANUARY 15, 2009

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida (for himself, Mr. DINGELL, Mr. MCGOVERN, Mr. DELAHUNT, Mr. BLUMENAUER, Mr. CROWLEY, Mr. HOLT, Ms. SCHAKOWSKY, Ms. WATERS, Ms. WATSON, Ms. WOOLSEY, Mr. COURTNEY, Ms. MOORE of Wisconsin, and Ms. MCCOLLUM) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Affairs, and in addition to the Committee on the Judiciary, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned

A BILL

To address the impending humanitarian crisis and potential security breakdown as a result of the mass influx of Iraqi refugees into neighboring countries, and the growing internally displaced population in Iraq, by increasing directed accountable assistance to these populations and their host countries, facilitating the resettlement of Iraqis at risk, 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; TABLE OF CONTENTS.**

4 (a) SHORT TITLE.—This Act may be cited as the
 5 “Iraqi Refugee and Internally Displaced Persons Humani-
 6 tarian Assistance, Resettlement, and Security Act of
 7 2009”.

8 (b) TABLE OF CONTENTS.—The table of contents for
 9 this Act is as follows:

- Sec. 1. Short title; table of contents.
- Sec. 2. Definitions.
- Sec. 3. Findings.
- Sec. 4. Sense of Congress.
- Sec. 5. Statements of policy.
- Sec. 6. Humanitarian assistance for vulnerable populations in Iraq and Iraqi
refugees.
- Sec. 7. Iraqi refugee admissions and processing.
- Sec. 8. International cooperation.
- Sec. 9. Reports to Congress.

10 **SEC. 2. DEFINITIONS.**

11 In this Act:

12 (1) IDPs.—The term “IDPs” means internally
 13 displaced people in Iraq.

14 (2) UNHCR.—The term “UNHCR” means the
 15 Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for
 16 Refugees.

17 (3) VULNERABLE POPULATIONS IN IRAQ.—The
 18 term “vulnerable populations in Iraq” includes
 19 IDPs, Iraqis from ethnically mixed families, women
 20 at risk, unaccompanied children and adolescents, the

1 elderly, Iraqis with serious medical needs, survivors
2 of violence or torture, Iraqis who are members of re-
3 ligious or other minority groups, including Chaldo
4 Assyrian Christians, Sabian Mandaens, Yazidis,
5 Jews, and Baha'is, and any other group determined
6 to be vulnerable by the Secretary of State in con-
7 sultation with the UNHCR.

8 **SEC. 3. FINDINGS.**

9 Congress finds the following:

10 (1) Since the beginning of the war in Iraq, ac-
11 cording to the UNHCR, more than 2,000,000 Iraqis
12 have fled their homes for neighboring countries to
13 avoid sectarian and other violence.

14 (2) According to the UNHCR, there are more
15 than 2,700,000 IDPs, many lacking adequate food,
16 shelter, and other basic services.

17 (3) The security situation in several locations
18 within Iraq reduces access to the Iraqi population by
19 Iraqi Government agencies and humanitarian aid
20 providers and greatly limits the provision of aid.

21 (4) The Iraq Study group predicted that “[a]
22 humanitarian catastrophe could follow as more refu-
23 gees are forced to relocate across the country and
24 the region.”.

1 (5) The dispersion of Iraqi refugees in poor
2 urban areas of host countries makes it exceedingly
3 difficult for humanitarian agencies to identify and
4 reach these populations.

5 (6) Many Iraqis have put their lives and those
6 of their families at risk by working for the United
7 States Government, United States corporations, the
8 United States media, and nongovernmental organi-
9 zations.

10 (7) Since March 2003, the United States has
11 resettled fewer than 20,000 Iraqi refugees, while
12 Jordan and Syria have provided temporary asylum
13 to 2,000,000 Iraqis, and other countries neighboring
14 Iraq have received tens of thousands more Iraqis.

15 (8) Since March 2003, Sweden has accepted
16 40,000 Iraqi refugees, and Denmark evacuated and
17 resettled 370 Iraqi interpreters and other Iraqis who
18 worked for Danish troops prior to the Danish con-
19 tingent's departure from Iraq in 2007.

20 (9) Current United States policies governing
21 the processing of refugees constrain United States
22 Government agencies from expediting the screening
23 processes and increasing the number of Iraqis ac-
24 cepted into the United States.

1 (10) The massive flow of Iraqi refugees into
2 neighboring host countries has overwhelmed existing
3 social, economic, and security capacities of such
4 countries.

5 (11) While Iraqi refugees and IDPs are dis-
6 proportionately made up of vulnerable populations,
7 many other segments of the Iraqi population at large
8 are also vulnerable.

9 (12) Increasing poverty and despair among dis-
10 placed populations may provide fertile ground for ex-
11 tremist ideologies to take root and possible recruit-
12 ment by extremist groups.

13 (13) The humanitarian crisis in Iraq and neigh-
14 boring countries threatens to destabilize the entire
15 region.

16 (14) United States policy is to admit at least
17 50 percent of the refugees referred by the UNHCR.

18 (15) During 2008, the Government of Iraq
19 dedicated \$18,000,000 to its Ministry of Displaced
20 and Immigration and offered \$25,000,000 to neigh-
21 boring countries hosting Iraqi refugees.

22 **SEC. 4. SENSE OF CONGRESS.**

23 It is the sense of Congress that—

24 (1) Iraqi refugees and IDPs will have an impact
25 on the security of the region and the short- and

1 long-term effects of their displacement should be
2 considered within overall United States policy to-
3 ward Iraq and be addressed at the highest levels of
4 Government;

5 (2) it is in the United States humanitarian and
6 national interests to demonstrate the United States
7 commitment to resettle Iraqi refugees and IDPs and
8 the United States should work with other govern-
9 ments, including the member states of the Organiza-
10 tion for Security and Cooperation in Europe, to en-
11 courage such governments to do the same; and

12 (3) the United States should express its grati-
13 tude and support to host countries for providing hu-
14 manitarian assistance to Iraqi refugees and to coun-
15 tries that have already resettled Iraqi refugees.

16 **SEC. 5. STATEMENTS OF POLICY.**

17 The policy of the United States shall be the following:

18 (1) To lead an initiative to provide for the relief
19 of vulnerable populations in Iraq and Iraqi refugees
20 in neighboring countries and to take the lead in
21 funding assistance requests from the UNHCR, other
22 humanitarian agencies, and international organiza-
23 tions by funding at levels well above the traditional
24 United States share, and to assist in the resettle-
25 ment of Iraqi refugees.

1 (2) To develop immediately a long-term com-
2 prehensive strategy for Iraq in coordination with the
3 Government of Iraq and host countries, the United
4 Nations, and nongovernmental organizations to meet
5 the humanitarian and security needs of Iraqi refu-
6 gees and IDPs and to establish within the Executive
7 Office of the President a Special Coordinator for
8 Iraqi Refugees and Internally Displaced Persons to
9 ensure expeditious and effective implementation of
10 such a strategy.

11 (3) To work with the Government of Iraq, the
12 United Nations, and nongovernmental organizations
13 to help the Government of Iraq improve its capacity
14 and ability to provide relief for vulnerable popu-
15 lations in Iraq in all communities throughout Iraq
16 and to provide assistance to Iraqi refugees in neigh-
17 boring countries.

18 (4) To commit to working with international
19 partners, including the United Nations, donor coun-
20 tries, international financial institutions, inter-
21 national and indigenous nongovernmental organiza-
22 tions, and other international organizations to assist
23 in providing for the emergency, medium-, and long-
24 term humanitarian needs of vulnerable populations
25 in Iraq and Iraqi refugees in neighboring countries.

1 **SEC. 6. HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE FOR VULNERABLE**
2 **POPULATIONS IN IRAQ AND IRAQI REFU-**
3 **GEEES.**

4 (a) IN GENERAL.—Except as provided in subsection
5 (e), with respect to vulnerable populations in Iraq and
6 with respect to each country containing a significant popu-
7 lation of Iraqi refugees, including Jordan, Syria, Turkey,
8 Lebanon, and Egypt, the Secretary of State shall provide
9 bilateral assistance to such countries, as appropriate
10 under United States law, or funding to international orga-
11 nizations and nongovernmental organizations in accord-
12 ance with subsection (b) that are working to provide hu-
13 manitarian assistance, including adequate food, shelter,
14 clean drinking water, sanitation, health care, education,
15 related social services, and protection to such refugees or
16 populations.

17 (b) ASSISTANCE AND FUNDING.—Assistance and
18 funding under subsection (a) shall be in the form of—

19 (1) contributions to the UNHCR that are not
20 less than 50 percent of the amount requested by the
21 UNHCR and other international organizations pro-
22 viding humanitarian assistance to vulnerable popu-
23 lations in Iraq and to Iraqi refugees in neighboring
24 countries, for 2009, 2010, and 2011 for aid to such
25 populations and refugees;

1 (2) contributions to the International Federa-
2 tion of the Red Cross and Red Crescent, other non-
3 governmental organizations, and other international
4 organizations working in such countries to provide
5 aid to vulnerable populations in Iraq and to Iraqi
6 refugees in neighboring countries; and

7 (3) technical assistance to relevant ministries of
8 the Government of Iraq, contingent on substantially
9 increased Government of Iraq funding of assistance
10 programs for vulnerable populations in Iraq and for
11 Iraqi refugees in neighboring countries, together
12 with appropriate monitoring mechanisms.

13 (c) SPECIAL PROVISIONS RELATING TO VULNER-
14 ABLE POPULATIONS IN IRAQ AND IRAQI REFUGEES.—The
15 Secretary of State shall make every effort to ensure that
16 the humanitarian needs of vulnerable populations in Iraq
17 and Iraqi refugees in neighboring countries are met, in-
18 cluding increased resources to improve the registration ca-
19 pabilities of nongovernmental organizations for such vul-
20 nerable populations and such refugees, adequate food,
21 shelter, clean drinking water, sanitation, health care, edu-
22 cation, and protection.

23 (d) AUTHORIZATIONS OF APPROPRIATIONS.—

24 (1) IN GENERAL.—There is authorized to be
25 appropriated \$700,000,000 for each of fiscal years

1 2009, 2010, and 2011 to carry out this section.
2 Amounts appropriated pursuant to this authoriza-
3 tion shall be in addition to amounts otherwise avail-
4 able for such purposes.

5 (2) FOR JORDAN.—

6 (A) IN GENERAL.—In addition to amounts
7 authorized to be appropriated pursuant to para-
8 graph (1), there is authorized to be appro-
9 priated \$500,000,000 for fiscal year 2009 to
10 Jordan to provide humanitarian assistance to
11 Iraqi refugees and to provide the necessary in-
12 frastructure to support both the needs of Iraqi
13 refugees and the Jordanian people, such as for
14 housing, educational facilities, health clinics,
15 improved access to water resources and sanita-
16 tion facilities and related social services.

17 (B) COOPERATION AND MONITORING.—In
18 cooperation with the Government of Jordan, the
19 President shall establish appropriate monitoring
20 and transparency mechanisms to ensure that
21 funds appropriated pursuant to the authoriza-
22 tion of appropriations in subparagraph (A) are
23 effectively administered.

24 (e) EXCEPTION.—Direct bilateral assistance may not
25 be provided to Syria.

1 **SEC. 7. IRAQI REFUGEE ADMISSIONS AND PROCESSING.**

2 (a) **NUMERICAL LIMITATIONS.**—In addition to the
3 numerical limitations provided for under subsections (a)
4 and (b) of section 207 of the Immigration and Nationality
5 Act (8 U.S.C. 1157), the number of refugees who may
6 be admitted during fiscal years 2009, 2010, and 2011
7 under subsection (c) of such section shall be increased by
8 not fewer than 20,000 for the purpose of admitting refu-
9 gees who—

10 (1) are citizens or nationals of Iraq; and

11 (2) became refugees on or after March 19,
12 2003.

13 (b) **PROCESSING PERSONNEL INCREASE.**—Not later
14 than September 30, 2009, the Secretary of State, in co-
15 ordination with the Secretary of Homeland Security, shall,
16 subject to the availability of appropriations for such pur-
17 pose, have increased by 100 percent the number of Fed-
18 eral personnel in Iraq (and in other countries in the re-
19 gion, where appropriate) who are conducting security re-
20 views of Iraqis who have applied for admission to the
21 United States as refugees above the number of such per-
22 sonnel conducting such reviews on the date of the enact-
23 ment of this Act.

24 (c) **AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.**—There
25 are authorized to be appropriated such sums as may be

1 necessary for fiscal years 2009 through 2011 to carry out
2 this section.

3 **SEC. 8. INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION.**

4 The Secretary of State, in cooperation with the Sec-
5 retary of Homeland Security, shall work with the inter-
6 national community, including the United Nations, the
7 Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, the
8 European Union, the Gulf Cooperation Council, the Arab
9 League, the Organization of American States, the Associa-
10 tion of Southeast Asian Nations, and others to establish
11 mechanisms to provide—

12 (1) financial assistance to vulnerable popu-
13 lations in Iraq and to Iraqi refugees in neighboring
14 countries through bilateral assistance to host govern-
15 ments or through international organizations that
16 are working directly with such populations and such
17 refugees;

18 (2) technical and financial assistance to inter-
19 national organizations in order to process refugees;
20 and

21 (3) increased attention to and advocacy on be-
22 half of vulnerable populations in Iraq and Iraqi refu-
23 gees in neighboring countries by continuing to
24 strongly support the work of United Nations agen-

1 cies and international organizations providing pro-
2 tection and assistance.

3 **SEC. 9. REPORTS TO CONGRESS.**

4 Not later than 180 days after the date of the enact-
5 ment of this Act, and every 6 months thereafter, the Sec-
6 retary of State and the Secretary of Homeland Security
7 shall submit to the Committee on Foreign Affairs of the
8 House of Representatives and the Committee on Foreign
9 Relations of the Senate a report on the implementation
10 of this Act, including—

11 (1) information concerning assistance and fund-
12 ing to host countries and international organizations
13 and nongovernmental organizations pursuant to sec-
14 tion 6, and accountability reports regarding the ex-
15 penditure of such funds;

16 (2) information concerning measures taken by
17 the United States to increase its capabilities to proc-
18 ess IDPs and Iraqi refugees for resettlement and the
19 number of such IDPs and refugees resettled under
20 section 7;

21 (3) an evaluation of the effectiveness of meas-
22 ures implemented by agencies of the Government of
23 Iraq to provide direct assistance to vulnerable popu-
24 lations in Iraq and Iraqi refugees in neighboring
25 countries; and

- 1 (4) information concerning progress on the im-
- 2 plementation of the long-term comprehensive strat-
- 3 egy described in section 5(2).

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