The committee met, pursuant to call, at 1:48 p.m., in Room 2172, Rayburn House Office Building, Hon. Gregory Meeks [chairman of the committee] presiding.
Chairman Meeks. The Committee on Foreign Affairs will come to order. And without objection, the chair is authorized to declare a recess of the committee at any point. Pursuant to Rule 4, the chair may postpone further proceedings on approving any measure or matter or adopting an amendment.

Without objection, all members will have five days to submit statements or extraneous materials of today's business. To insert statements into the record, please have your staff email the previously circulated address or contact full committee staff.

As a reminder to members joining remotely, please keep your video function on at all times, even when not recognized by the chair.

Members are responsible for muting and unmuting themselves. Consistent with House rules, staff will only mute members as appropriate when they are not under recognition to eliminate background noise.

As members were notified yesterday, we intend to consider eight measures and their amendments en bloc and will then move to consider six measures and their amendments separately. Any roll calls will be postponed until the end of the markup.

Pursuant to notice for purposes of markup, I will now call up the measures and their amendments that were previously circulated to members' offices which without objection will be considered en bloc and each measure is considered as read and the amendments to each are considered as read and are agreed to.
And without objection, after remarks, the committee will vote to order the measures favorably reported en bloc as amended, if amended. And any amendment or amendments to each measure shall be reported as a single amendment in the nature of a substitute.

The measures in the en bloc package are H.R. 8520, Countering Untrusted Telecommunications Act; H.R. 8503, Securing Global Telecommunications Act; H.R. 8259, Arms Exports Delivery Solutions Act; H.Res. 558, Urging the European Union to designate Hizballah in its entirety as a terrorist organization, with Meijer Amendment in the Nature of a Substitute No. 11; H.R. 6265, CAPTAGON Act; H.Res. 744, Condemning the Government of Iran's state-sponsored persecution of its Baha'i minority and its continued violation of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, with a Deutch Amendment in the Nature of a Substitute No. 67; H.Res. 1259, Condemning the assassination of former Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe and honoring his life and legacy, with a Cabot Amendment in the Nature of a Substitute No. 60; and H.R. 8453, Upholding the Dayton Peace Agreement Through Sanctions Act.

And I now recognize myself to speak on the en bloc package. I support all of the measures included within this en bloc package. As we navigate through historic times, the American people look to Congress and this committee in particular to strengthen our nation's position on the world's stage.
And I'm proud of the work our committee has accomplished in response to our nation's foreign policy challenges. And I am proud this en bloc continues this great work. First, this en bloc includes two measures by my friend, Ted Deutch, Chairman of the Middle East Subcommittee, H.Res. 558 and H.Res. 744. And when Ted departs this committee, we will miss his tireless advocacy in defense of the United States and our allies around the globe. He's been a true champion.

And despite all we know about Hizballah, a cutthroat terrorist organization that serves as an Iranian proxy and violent militia, our friends and partners in the European Union only include Hizballah's military wing and not its political wing on its list of sanctioned terrorist organizations. And with the adoption of H.Res. 558, let's hope Europe hears the voice of this Congress loudly and clearly and finally takes the necessary steps to designate Hizballah as a whole. It is long overdue.

I also support H.Res. 744. The resolution before us today calls on the Iranian government to release all Baha'i prisoners in its campaign of state-sponsored persecution and reverse discriminatory policies against the Baha'i community. The persecution of a peaceful minority on the basis of their religion is a failure in morality, and I'm pleased it is included in this en bloc.

This markup also includes two important measures:
Representative Manning's Securing Global Telecommunications Act and Representative Wild's Countering Untrusted Telecommunications Act that combats the PRC's tech corrosion and promote American telecom leadership at a moment when information and communications technology is emerging as a pivotal front in great power competition. China has successfully positioned one of its national champions, Huawei, to become the 5G equipment market leader.

These threats are real. Just this weekend, new reports indicated that Huawei equipment near military bases here in the United States could capture and disrupt important military communications, including messages related to nuclear deployments. We cannot let this grave risk go unaddressed, either here at home or overseas.

The two bills include crucial provisions that will provide the most comprehensive transparency of the issue ever requested by United States Congress. It authorizes and codifies the International Digital, Economic, and Telecommunications Advisory Committee, the IDET, and require a comprehensive global strategy to promote American telecom leadership. So I want to thank Representative Wild and Representative Manning for their leadership on these bills and urge all of my colleagues to support both of their important bills.

I also support H.R. 8259, legislation that will help meet
the defense needs of our allies and partners. Through additional
reporting, this bill will allow Congress to better understand
any delays in arms transfers to the Indo-Pacific region. This
legislation will also send a strong message to our Indo-Pacific
friends and competitors that Congress is committed to regional
peace and security and supported credible deterrence and strong
defense partnerships.

H.R. 6265, the CAPTAGON Act, addresses an important issue
which continues to fuel the Assad regime's coffers and campaign
of brutality. The Assad regime has colluded with criminal
networks and militias, including those smuggling arms, drugs,
antiquities, oil, and other contraband as well the narcotic
stimulate drug Captagon which is trafficked to, within, and around
Syria and become a cash source for the Assad regime to enrich
itself and prolong its heinous violence against Syrians. This
bill will require the federal government to develop an interagency
strategy to disrupt and dismantle narcotics trafficking and
affiliated networks linked to Syria's Assad regime.

I would like to thank Representatives Ann Wagner and Susan
Wild on their work to protect the Dayton Accords through H.R.
8453 during a sensitive time in Bosnia. The Dayton Accords and
the peace that they protect us under threat from cynical actors
in the region, this bill strengthens tools to hold these actors
accountable and sends an important signal from the committee that
we are watching and we care about ensuring a democratic future for all people in Bosnia and Herzegovina. I urge my colleagues to support this legislation.

And finally, I strongly support H.Res. 1259. And I want to thank Rep. Steve Chabot for introducing this important resolution. I was shocked and saddened to hear about the assassination of former Prime Minister Abe earlier this while he was engaging in the democratic act of campaigning that every member on this dais has engaged in.

This heinous act of political violence has no place in today's world, essentially in a vibrant and peaceful democracy like Japan's. Former Prime Minister Abe was a driver of global peace and security and a stalwart friend of the United States of American. Japan is stronger today and the world a safer place because of his statesmanship, vision, and service. And I offer my deepest condolences and prayers to members of the Abe family and the Japanese people. I'm confident in part due to Prime Minister Abe's leadership that Japan's best days are ahead of them.

I strongly support all the measures that we're considering today in the en bloc. And I urge all members to join me in doing the same. Before we continue, I'd now like to recognize my friend and ranking member, Mr. McCaul of Texas, for his remarks.

Mr. McCaul. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'm supportive of
all the measures we'll be considering here today. Today, we'll be considering to bipartisan bills. I offered the PEACE through Music Diplomacy Act and the U.S.-Africa Economic Engagement Act.

I've long believed that music is a powerful tool for peace. This bill recognizes a unique and important role musicians play in promoting peace globally and authorizes the State Department's exchange programs to bring young musical artists together. With the power of the private sector behind them, these programs can be even more effective in building peace and supporting U.S. foreign policy goals. I also want to thank my good friend from Florida, Mr. Deutch, for cosponsoring this bill.

Onto the U.S.-Africa Economic Engagement Act I introduced, this bill represents a key opportunity to strengthen commercial ties and increase U.S. trade investment. Africa is home to some of the fastest growing economies in the world. And the continent's rapidly growing middle class is forecast to triple by 2030.

However, the Peoples Republic of China is rapidly expanding strategic economic investments on the continent through predatory lending and debt trap diplomacy such as their Belt and Road Initiative. The CCP has already surpassed the U.S. as Africa's largest trading partner. And when I met partners and allies around the world, I ask why they are entering into dangerous agreements with the CCP.
They tell me it is because we are just not there. The U.S. government needs to show up on the field and compete. We must provide an alternative to PRC financing and aggressively advocate for U.S. companies looking to invest in and trade with partners in Africa.

Since the Trump Administration launched the Prosper Africa Act in June of 2019, the U.S. government has helped to close over 800 deals across 45 African countries for an estimated value of 50 billion in exports and investments. This means jobs created both in the United States and across Africa. This legislation would build on my bill, the Championing American Business Through Diplomacy Act, which was signed into law and focuses on promoting American businesses abroad.

The bill before us today will better coordinate the various tools of the U.S. government like the Development Finance Corporation, Millennium Challenge Corporation, USAID, and Department of Commerce to speak with one voice and better support U.S. companies looking to invest in Africa. I also want to thank my colleague, Representative Young Kim, for introducing the Arms Export Delivery Solution Act which I am a cosponsor of. The bipartisan bill requires a joint State and Defense Department report on the status of certain delayed arms, sales to Taiwan, the Republic of Korea, Japan, Australia, and New Zealand.

This needed report must also include information on actions
being taken to expedite deliveries of defense articles and interim solutions in the event of shipment delays. This cannot wait. We must act now. The clock is ticking, especially for Taiwan as the CCP's military capabilities continue to grow.

And lastly, I'm a proud cosponsor of Representative French Hill's bipartisan CAPTAGON Act and Representative Chabot's resolution condemning the assassination of former Japanese Prime Minister Abe in honoring his life and legacy. And I also support Representative Wagner's bill, upholding the Dayton Peace Agreement Through Sanctions Act. I also want to thank Chairman Meeks for considering these measures today and for being a bipartisan team playing on this committee which we have such a rich history of doing so. With that, I yield back.

Chairman Meeks. Thank you, Mr. McCaul. Any other members seeking recognition? Representative Mr. Deutch of Florida, chair of the Subcommittee on the Middle East, North Africa, and Global Counterterrorism, recognized for five minutes.

Mr. Deutch. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And thanks to you and the ranking member for holding this important markup. We have 14 measures before this committee today I'm proud to support, including the 8 being considered in the en bloc.

I want to highlight two provisions that I've been honored to champion throughout my time in Congress but only after taking a moment to thank you, Mr. Chairman, for your kind words about
me earlier in the markup. This committee's work is always important. The voice of the House of Representatives in Foreign Affairs, the oversight we do with the State Department always matters.

But at a time when Russia's invasion of Ukraine puts at the very center of our work the importance of maintaining and defending democracy on our planet, there is no one better suited to be helming, chairing this committee at this moment than Chairman Meeks. I am grateful for the inclusion of my resolution, H.Res. 558, that applauds the continued cooperation between U.S. and European Union to combat Hizballah's terrorist activities and urges the EU to designate the entirety of Hizballah as a terrorist organization. I'm proud to lead this resolution with my good friends Gus Bilirakis, Kathy Manning, and Peter Meijer along with a host of other bipartisan colleagues.

It is a fact that Hizballah is a terrorist organization with support from the Iranian regime that it has carried out multiple deadly global terror attacks, continues to spread violence and terror throughout the region, including fighting alongside odious Assad regime in the conflict of Syria, undermining Lebanon stability, threatening Israel and its citizens with drones, missiles, and threats of invasion. Hassan Nasrallah, the Secretary General of Hizballah, made his organization's violent intentions and willingness to target civilian centers crystal
clear. Just this week when he said, all land and sea targets of Israel are within the range of Hizballah missiles, yet when the EU partially designated Hizballah in 2013, it made a false distinction between the so-called military political wings of the organization and chose to designate the military wing of Hizballah rather than the entirety of the organization.

However, there are no different branches of Hizballah. It is, one, a terrorist organization. You don't have to take my word for this or the words of Germany, Israel, Guatemala, Argentina, U.K., or many other countries who have designated all of Hizballah a terrorist organization.

One of Hizballah's representatives in the Lebanese parliament explicitly said, quote, "the military wing of Hizballah is inseparable from its political wing" close quote. The U.S. makes no distinction between the organization's branches and includes Hizballah in its entirety on the FTO, the Foreign Terrorist Organization list. This resolution simply urges our EU partners to do the same. And I hope that we will pass it unanimously here today.

Also please see the inclusion of my resolution, H.Res. 744 which condemns Iran's state-sponsored persecution of its Baha'i population and urges the President and Secretary of State to impose sanctions on officials and individuals responsible for these serious human rights abuses. I am so grateful to Chairman Meeks,
Ranking Member McCaul, and Ranking Member Wilson for joining me
in leading this resolution along with the many other bipartisan
cosponsors that have allowed this resolution to pass successfully
for years, as far back as 1982, and shows the depth of the depravity
of the Iranian regime that there is still an urgent need to continue
addressing the Iranian government's persecution of members of
the Baha'i faith in Iran in 2022.

Just this morning, I met with Ambassador Rashad Hussain,
the State Department's Ambassador at Large for International
Religious Freedom. And we discussed the depth of brutality of
Iran's persecution of religious minorities especially at Baha'i.

One particular excerpt that struck me from the State Department's
2021 report on international religious freedom in Iran described
an instance where Iranian authorities denied Baha'i's permission
to bury their dead in available plots in a Tehran cemetery
designated for Baha'i which forced them to bury their dead in
a mass grave site.

This instance is one of countless examples of harassment,
vviolence, dehumanization, and persecution of Baha'i faith at the
hands of the Iranian regime as part of the government's broader
strategy to deny religious freedom to minorities. This
resolution successfully passed the House last Congress. I urge
all of my colleagues to support it.

I want to thank Mr. Chabot and Meeks for introducing a
resolution condemning the assassination of Japan's former Prime Minister Shinzo Abe. Prime Minister Abe was a great friend of the U.S. and the American people and his death is a terrible loss for everyone in Japan and indeed around the world. Again, Mr. Chairman, to you and the ranking member, thank you both for the way that you run this committee in the bipartisan manner that you do, recognizing that America's face to the world is the strongest when we stand together, and I yield back.

Chairman Meeks. The gentleman yields back. I now recognize Representative Ann Wagner of Missouri who's the vice ranking member of the full committee for five minutes.

Mrs. Wagner. Chairman Meeks and Ranking Member McCaul, I'd like to thank you both for working with me to include my bipartisan bill, H.R. 8453, the Upholding the Dayton Peace Agreement Through Sanctions Act. And it's being marked up today in this en bloc markup. And I want to say that I support all of the bills in the en bloc. But I'm most grateful that you have included my particular piece of legislation.

Bosnia and Herzegovina are headed into important general elections this October. And time is running out to send a very strong, deterrent message to bad actors intent on destabilizing the country. Today, deepening divisions in Bosnia fueled by the reckless secession threats of politicians like Milorad Dodik, the Serb member of Bosnia's tripartite presidency, pose a grave
threat to Balkan stability.

The October elections could be a very critical flashpoint. The foundations of Bosnia's stability, its democratic institutions, its ethnic power sharing arrangements, even the Office of the High Representative, the independent body tasked with implementing the Dayton Accords are at risk. It worries me tremendously to see nationalist parties with the support of the ruthless Putin regime working to roll back the progress that Bosnia has made.

We have a very strong Bosnian community in my hometown of St. Louis. Many of my constituents fled to our city during the 1992 to 1995 Bosnian war in which more than 100,000 lost their lives. A majority of those killed were Muslim majority Bosniaks. My Bosnian constituents want to see their homeland prosper as a unified sovereign and multiethnic state. I cannot imagine the heartache they must feel when Dodik denies the horrifying genocide committed by Serb troops against Bosniak Muslims at Srebrenica or when he threatens to lead the dissolution of Bosnia. These actions are offensive to those who lost loved ones in the Bosnia War and are profoundly dangerous to Bosnia's future.

It is imperative that the United States wield its economic toolkit to protect Bosnian sovereignty and territorial integrity as the country navigates all of these challenges. H.R. 8453 codifies the mandate and mandates key sanction authorities to
address the political crisis and corruption in Bosnia. Ahead of the country's October general election, this bill sends a critical signal to local officials engaging in destabilizing and anti-democratic behavior and to Russia for its destructive influence that the United States will hold them accountable.

I urge my colleagues to join me in advancing the Upholding the Dayton Peace Agreement Through Sanctions Act to demonstrate the United States unequivocal commitment to peace and stability in Bosnia. I appreciate the chairman and the ranking member's swift attention to this urgently needed bill. I'd also like to thank Representative Wild for working with me on this legislation.

I have the privilege to co-lead the congresswomen's Countering Untrusted Telecommunications Act which will improve our understanding of the pervasiveness of Chinese and Russian telecommunications equipment in sensitive overseas posts and position the United States and allies to eliminate security risks.

I urge support for this legislation as well. I am grateful for this markup, and I yield back the remainder of my time, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman Meeks. The gentlelady yields back the remainder of her time. I'll now recognize Representative William Keating of Massachusetts who's the chair of the Subcommittee on Europe, Energy, the Environment, and Cyber for five minutes.

Mr. Keating. Well, I want to thank you, Chair Meeks and
Ranking Member McCaul, for holding this markup. The bills on this markup come from all regions and themes. But they're representative of the many global problems that we're facing today and that this committee is working to address.

I want to state outright that I support both this en bloc package and each of the individual bills we're considering today. This includes H.R. 8520, Representative Wild's bill on countering untrusted telecommunications which is a common sense measure that'll provide Congress with an understanding of the widespread nature of malign actors and the telecommunications industry and ensure that the U.S. and the diplomatic posts are prepared to counter these threats.

I also want to strongly endorse Chair Deutch's measure, H.R. 558, calling for the European Union to designate Hizballah as a terrorist organization. Hizballah is a dangerous organization that has committed terrorist actions throughout the globe. Years ago, I was the sponsor designating Hizballah as a terrorist organization. And now I strongly encourage our European allies to make the same designation to prevent Hizballah from continuing their global terror activities.

Also included en bloc is H.R. 8453, Upholding the Dayton Peace Agreement Through Sanctions Act. The Balkans are a region of vital importance to Europe. And I believe it's essential that we continue to support developing democratic institutions in the
With that being said, I also support a bill that will bolster democratic institutions ahead of the upcoming October elections in Bosnia and Herzegovina. While the rest of the measures I'll speak about are outside the en bloc package, I'm hopeful they're be reported through committee first as H.R. 922, condemning the use of hunger as a weapon of war and recognizing the effect of conflict on global food security and famine. I wholeheartedly support in cosponsoring this measure and will continue to use my chairmanship on the Subcommittee on Europe to bring attention to this global food crisis created by Russia's illegal war in Ukraine.

I fully support and I'm cosponsoring both H.R. 7240, a Reauthorization of the READ Act and H.R. 4134, the Keeping Girls in School Act. Our children are our future. And these vital pieces of legislation will ensure children and especially young women and girls are empowered through education.

I'm also cosponsoring H.R. 8463, the Millennium Challenge Corporation Eligibility Expansion Act. Just yesterday, I had the honor of hosting along with Ms. Alice Albright from the Millennium Challenge Corporation, President Osmani, and Prime Minister Kurti of Kosovo in our full committee hearing room right here signing the Millennium Challenge Compact. This compact will expand energy capabilities and increase the number of trained
energy technicians in Kosovo with specific focus on increasing
the number of the women in the field. This legislation could
expand MCC's ability to support similar projects across Europe
and Southeast Europe. And I hope the committee will report this
legislation favorably.

Finally, I want to speak in support of H.R. 6455, the
U.S.-Africa Economic Engagement Act. A few weeks ago, I held
a joint hearing with Chair Bass of the Africa Subcommittee on
the Russian influence in Africa. This hearing made it very clear
that without U.S. investment in the continent, Russia and China
will continue to exert malign influence across the continent,
ultimately undermining the interest of Africans as well as our
own.

For this reason, I'm in support and a cosponsor of those
legislation which promotes, facilitates, and increases trade and
investment between U.S. and Africa in an effort to ensure long-term
stability and prosperity across the continent. Thank you again,
Chair Meeks and Ranking Member McCaul, for holding this markup.

And I yield back the balance of my time.

Chairman Meeks. The gentleman yields back the balance of
his time. I now recognize Representative Steve Chabot of Ohio
who is the ranking member of the Subcommittee on Asia, the Pacific,
Central Asia, and Nonproliferation for five minutes.

Mr. Chabot. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. I want to
voice my support for several measures that we have before us today.

First as ranking member, as you said, of the Asian Pacific Subcommittee, I'd like to discuss H.Res. 1259, legislation that I introduced with you, Mr. Chairman, and also with Ranking Member McCaul and Chairman Bera to condemn the assassination of former Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe and most importantly honor his life and his legacy.

And I want to thank the many members of this committee on both sides of the aisle who have joined us as cosponsors. Prime Minister Abe was a towering figure in post-war Japanese history. As Japan's longest serving prime minister, he worked tirelessly to strengthen his country, to establish it as a force for good, and strengthen the collective security in the Indo-Pacific.

In fact, he coined the term, Indo-Pacific, and was a major champion of the Quad, both of which helped bring India in as a key stakeholder in the broader region. He was also a firm believer in the U.S.-Japan alliance. At a time of rising tensions with China brought on by the ambitions of the CCP, Chinese Communist Party, the U.S.-Japan bilateral relationship stands as the cornerstone of peace and security in Indo-Pacific region.

We owe Prime Minister Abe a debt of gratitude for strengthening our alliance through multiple U.S. administrations. His senseless and shocking assassination was a blow to us all. My heard and I think the hearts of all of us go out to his family
and to all the people of Japan.

I had the opportunity to have lunch in Tokyo with Prime Minister Abe a number of years ago. This was before he became prime minister, just myself and him, one staff member, and a translator. We met for about an hour and a half.

We talked about a lot of things, improving the Japanese-South Korean relationship, the modernization of the Japanese military, and the importance of them taking that very important step, the Quad before there was a Quad. We talked about the importance of that. He couldn't have been more thoughtful, more gracious, more accommodating. And the food was good too. I just want to say this was a tremendous towering figure, and he's going to be missed by us and by all of the force of good in this world.

I next like to turn to Ms. Kim's Arms Exports Delivery Solutions Act. As a co-chair of the Congressional Taiwan Caucus, I believe this solution is absolutely critical. Taiwan is still waiting for weapons that it's bought and paid for but which we just can't seem to produce on a reasonable timeline.

This legislation draws needed attention to those delays and insists that we fix them. Last week, CIA Director Burns said that a PRC invasion of Taiwan is, and I quote, "less the question of whether the Chinese leadership might choose some years down the road to use force to control Taiwan but how and when they would do it," unquote. The lights are flashing red. Taiwan
cannot defend itself with missiles that are on backorder.

Lastly, I'd like to voice my support for two resolutions which I cosponsored and were introduced by my good friend, Mr. Deutch, H.Res. 558, which urges the European Union to designate the Baha'i — excuse me, Hizballah in its entirety as a terrorist organization, including its political wing. That's critical. The European Union needs to recognize that Hizballah exists for the purpose of destroying Israel and that there's no distinction between its various entities which merely serve as so many masks for its true purpose.

And finally, I'd like to voice my support for H.Res. 744 which condemns the Iranian regimes persecution of the Baha'is. Since the Iranian Revolution, Iran has executed at least 200 Baha'is. It's dismissed 10,000 of them from their jobs, and committed a wide variety of other abuses. The Baha'i faith is not a danger to Iran.

In fact, it espouses the values of peace and unity and cooperation and education and interfaith harmony and an end to prejudice. Indeed the Baha'i community in my hometown Cincinnati has brought these values to our city as I've learned through interactions with Baha'i representatives over the years in my district. Iran's persecution of this peaceful minority is reprehensible and must come to an end.

So Mr. Chairman, I'd urge my colleagues to support these
Chairman Meeks. The gentleman yields back. I now recognize Representative Gerry Connolly of Virginia who is the president of the NATO Parliamentarian Assembly for five minutes.

Mr. Connolly. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you for bringing us together for this markup. I certainly support all of the bills en bloc. And I particularly want to thank our colleagues for a number initiatives, including Keeping Girls in School Act. Our friend Lois Frankel of Florida brought that to us. And I just think today is an important step.

I would like to address H.R. 6498, Promoting Peace, Education, and Cultural Exchange to Music Diplomacy Act if I may, Mr. Chairman. Last week I had an amendment on the floor that would have made it a little easier to promote art in embassies abroad as a diplomatic tool, both local art, indigenous art, and American art. And it went down.

It went down in part because it was characterized as a big giveaway and why would we be spending money on art. And my friend, the ranking member, who normally have a good working relationship with was quoted as saying in National Review, "I hate to break it to Representative Connolly, but weapons win wars, not 400,000 dollar cloud sculptures," unquote. That same gentleman says today, I've longed believed that music is a powerful tool that can be used to reach across cultures and promote peace around
the world.

So apparently music is okay, but art is not. And I just want to say I support the bill. It'd be inconsistent of me not to. But I will say I don't understand having two different standards. Music is the source of diplomacy to avoid war, promote peace. That's a sound principle.

But our nemesis, that's not. And I just want to register my concern that the same logic that led to outside groups lobbying against a simple amendment on art in the embassies could be used again on this when and if we bring this bill to the floor because the same logic could pertain. So I just wanted to register that concern and my sorrow at the nature of the debate that we had and be heard on that issue. And I think thank you and yield back.

Mr. Deutch. [Presiding.] I thank Mr. Connolly and recognize my friend, Mr. Wilson, of South Carolina, the ranking member of the Subcommittee on Middle East, North Africa, and Global Counterterrorism for five minutes.

Mr. Wilson. Thank you, Chairman Ted Deutch. And indeed, I want to thank Chairman Greg Meeks and Ranking Member Mike McCaul for bringing these important bipartisan measures before us today.

And I am grateful to join with President Gerry Connolly to support House Resolution 558 which takes the important step of urging European Union allies to fully designate Hizballah as a terrorist organization.
Going back over 40 years, Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps deployed its Quds Force to Lebanon what we now know today as Hizballah with thousands of rockets to attack Israel. Now Tehran's capacity to export terrorism through its proxies around the globe, even as close as Latin American, has expanded greatly in resources. Hizballah's terrorist arm and political operatives symbiotically with political help in secure gains in the deployment and receive legitimacy.

This is a threat to democracy that cannot be ignored. And I appreciate Chairman Ted Deutch's leadership in encouraging the European Union to fully address the existential threat which is part of the conflict between democracy's rule of law being opposed by authoritarian's rule of gun.

I also support House Resolution 6265, and I appreciate that the Congressman French Hill's leadership on the CAPTAGON Act. Backed by war criminals Putin and Raisi, Bashar Assad is running a narco-state in addition to this campaign of terror against the people of Syria. Sadly, the Biden Administration in pursuit of a flawed nuclear deal with terrorist state Iran has prevented strategies to address this multi-billion dollar trafficking ring and instead has implicitly green lit normalization with war criminal Assad.

Assad and his cronies have profited and lined the pockets of their war machine with illicit funding from the Captagon trade.
This is dangerous and addictive drug has proliferated in the region and poses a threat to U.S. national security. I'm grateful to have been a cosponsor of this legislation.

And finally, House Resolution 774, the mass murder Ebrahim Raisi's theocratic regime in Tehran has increased in its ongoing persecution of brutality against a minority, Baha'i faith, and dissonance deems a threat. Practicing members have been round up and executed with drummed up charges leveled against them with no due process. Baha'i families have been ordered to bury their dead in mass graves.

Victims of human rights violations by this criminal regime deserve a voice as it is not the people of Iran who perpetuate this senseless violence but the draconian regime. Democracies must stand firm and in support of human rights and dignity around the world. I was grateful to co-lead this resolution with my friend and colleague, Chairman Ted Deutch, who we wish well in future endeavors as he successfully completes this congressional services. I yield back.

Mr. Deutch. I thank my friend, Mr. Wilson, and yield five minutes to Ms. Titus of Nevada.

Ms. Titus. Well, thank you very much. And I want to thank the chairman and the ranking member for holding this markup and bringing these important pieces of legislation up for discussion today. I'm glad to be cosponsoring several of the bills that
we're considering, and I want to thank my colleagues for the
opportunity to work with them collaboratively to move these
forward.

I want to talk about several of the bills that are up. Some
are in the en bloc and some are coming up later. But I'll put
it all in one short speech so you won't have to call on me again.

As we heard last week from the World Food Programme's Director
David Beasley and we also talked about it in yesterday's
informative hearing the actions of Putin and others around the
world are undoubtedly causing a global food crisis. So I would
urge my colleagues to advance H.Res. 922 which condemns the use
of hunger as a weapon. And I thank Ms. Jacobs for her leadership
on this issue. I'd also like to highlight H.R. 7240, the
Reinforcing Education Accountability Development, or READ Act
that's lead -- reauthorization led by Africa Subcommittee
Chairwoman Bass and Ranking Member Smith, as well as H.R. 4134,
Keeping Girls in School Act led by Ms. Frankel, which I'm cosponsor
of.

As the world continues to try and recover from the pandemic
now more than ever, it's crucial that the United States is doing
all that it can to support education efforts around the world.
We must do all we can to ensure that this doesn't irrevocably
influence education development because they've been living in
COVID times which have been difficult enough. And don't want
development to be stymied because that will have a long-term impact on the growth of the global economic. This is essentially true for young women who time and time again have shown that even with less resources that can achieve more and do more to support their communities when they just have the opportunity learn.

I'd also like to mention H.R. 8463, the Millennium Challenge Corporation Eligibility Expansion Act. And I appreciate the IDOC, or I-D-O-C, Subcommittee Chairman Castro's leadership on this. We've got to find inventive ways to support our development efforts. So I hope this legislation will open the door for even greater engagement by our committee, especially in regard to the DFC and providing them flexibility to work with and support more partners.

Finally, I want to acknowledge and commend you, Mr. Deutch, for your years of service on this committee. You will certainly be missed by me personally and all your colleagues, professionally and politically. Your efforts to support religious freedom are second to none.

I want to thank you for allowing me to join you on H.Res. 744, Condemning the state of Iran's state-sponsored persecution of the Baha'í minority and continuing to support the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Unfortunately across the country, we see rights of religious populations are discriminated against.

And we long advocated in this committee for religious freedom,
and I know we'll continue to do so.

I just hope this will lead to more discussions regarding other minority rights before the end of Congress. We can engage again on trying to support other marginalized groups like the LGTBQI+ community. So I am strongly in support of these measures.

I will vote for them, and I encourage my colleagues to do so.

I thank them for their hard work in bringing this forward, and I yield back.

Mr. Deutch. Thank you, Ms. Titus, a good colleague and a good friend. And I yield five minutes to Representative Barr of Kentucky.

Mr. Barr. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And I move to strike the last word.

Mr. Deutch. The gentleman is recognized.

Mr. Barr. Thank you. I join in support of Representative Kim's bill, H.R. 8259, the Arms Exports Delivery Solutions Act.

I commend my good friend, the gentlelady from the California, for her leadership on this and advocacy for Taiwan.

This important piece of legislation would require a joint Department of State and Department of Defense report on the status of certain delayed arms sales to Taiwan, the Republic of Korea, Japan, Australia, and New Zealand. This is a comprehensive bill that relates to a number of allied countries who have purchased arms. But we still receive reports that these arms have been
This is particularly troubling with respect to Taiwan given the deterrence imperatives relative to the CCP. Particularly important about this legislation is that it requires the inclusion of actions to expedite deliveries of defense articles and interim solutions in the event of shipment delays in support of Taiwan's self-defense. The Taiwanese Minister of Defense last year stated that the People's Republic of China would be capable of mounting a full scale invasion of Taiwan by 2025.

However the current time table for deliveries to Taiwan are falling behind this deadline. We must not let Taiwan become another Ukraine by delaying support to this critical partner in the Indo-Pacific. I was proud to cosponsor this legislation as an amendment in the recent FY23 NDAA and was pleased it was included in a bipartisan fashion in the House bill.

Every day, we are seeing the People's Republic of China make more and more incursions into Taiwan's air space. We are even seeing China try and tell the Speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives that she is not allowed to travel to Taiwan. We must respond to this aggression by showing the world that we support Taiwan's self-defense, not just through speeches and congressional visits but through the delivery of critically important arms sales that Taiwan is requesting.

This bill will shed light on what we need to do fix the delays
in arms sales and shore up Taiwan's self-defense. This is critical for Taiwan's deterrence capabilities. I urge my colleagues to support this measure in the en bloc. I once again thank Representative Kim for her initiative and leadership on this, and I yield back.

Mr. Deutch. Thank you, Mr. Barr. Representative Wild, you're recognized for five minutes.

Ms. Wild. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I rise in support of my bill, the Countering Untrusted Telecommunications Act. And let me begin by thanking Chairman Meeks for his leadership and for serving as an original cosponsor of this legislation. And thank you to my colleague across the aisle, Representative Ann Wagner, for her commitment to bipartisanship and for co-leading this legislation with me.

Reporting has shown how the Chinese regime uses its major telecommunications companies, Huawei and ZTE, as a vehicle for major human rights violations, particularly against the Uyghur people, as well as to target U.S. interests and national security along with our allies' interest and national security. A Washington Post article from December 2021 uncovered that Huawei presentations focused on showing how its technologies can help government authorities identify individuals by voice, monitor political individuals of interest, manage ideological reeducation and labor schedules for prisoners, and help retailers track
shoppers using facial recognition.

In response to this threat, the purpose of this bill is clear, to obtain reports on the vulnerabilities in our own overseas embassies as well as within the networks of our collective defense allies, to direct the State Department to identify strategic telecoms infrastructure projects to strengthen our national security, and to amend the Securities and Exchange Act to require companies to report on whether they have contracted to use telecoms equipment or services that run counter to our security interests.

This legislation provides us with a crucial opportunity to stand firm against the atrocious human rights record and mass surveillance apparatus of the Chinese regime. I urge my colleagues to join me in passing the bill by a resounding bipartisan margin.

And I will also take this opportunity to briefly express my support for the legislation introduced by my colleague from Missouri, Representative Wagner, the Upholding the Dayton Peace Agreement Through Sanctions Act. Throughout the 1990s, we saw the devastating toll of ethnic conflict in the Balkans. We cannot go back to that time. And we know that Vladimir Putin has been actively working for years to support Serbian separatism and stoke ethnic division in order to dismantle the region's fragile framework for peace and advance his interests in the region.

The Dayton Accords are not perfect. But the answer is not
to stand by and watch as the agreement is dismantled. The answer is to preserve the accords and build on the progress made.

I'm proud that this legislation addresses a key concern that I've raised in this committee. It calls on the Bosnian government to implement the rulings of the European Court of Human Rights which would put an end to the ethnic and religious requirements on holding high ranking political office that have unacceptably disenfranchised far too many members of the population. I urge my colleagues to join me in passing this bill so that we can send a clear signal in support of peace, democracy, and stability in the region. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I yield back.

Mr. Deutch. Thank you, Ms. Wild. Representative Kim, you're recognized for five minutes.

Ms. Kim of California. Thank you, Chairman. And I would like to speak on my bill, H.R. 8259. And I want to thank other Representatives who have already spoken in support of this bill as well.

The People's Republic of China is becoming increasingly aggressive in Taiwan Strait. And it continues sending dozens of war planes into Taiwan's air defense identification zone and demands that the United States and its defense relationship with Taiwan. The PRC has even threatening a response to Speaker Pelosi's potential Taiwan visit, and I do sincerely hope that she does not bend to their threats.
Xi Jinping has paid close attention to our response to Russian's annexation of Crimea and is paying attention to our response to Russia's invasion in Ukraine. Taiwan has purchased billions of dollars' worth of military and defense systems that have yet to be delivered, including Patriot missile system upgrades, F-16 fighter jets, Stinger missiles, and other critical, critical weapons to Taiwan's security. The Arms Export Delivery Solutions Act requires Secretaries of State and Defense to provide Congress with their report.

That contains a list of approved transfer of defense articles to Taiwan and other allies in Japan, South Korea, Australia, and New Zealand, the estimated start and end dates of delivery for those approved and incomplete transfer items, and any changes in delivery dates with explanation as to why such delays are there and options for expediting the deliveries and authorities and powers Congress can use to expedite those deliveries. And also, we want a description of ongoing interagency efforts to support operational capabilities of delivered systems and a separate description of action items the State Department is taking to expedite deliveries, especially to Taiwan.

I want to thank Ranking Member McCaul for leading this important legislation with me as well as Acting Subcommittee Ranking Member Steven Chabot and Representative Brian Mast. And I want to thank Chairman Meeks for bringing this very important
piece of legislation up for committee consideration. And I urge all my colleagues to support this legislation. Thank you, and I yield back.

Mr. Deutch. Thank you, Representative Kim. And with that, the committee will stand in recess for just a bit.

[Recess.]

Chairman Meeks. I now recognize Representative Manning from the State of California for five minutes. North Carolina. What did I say? I said California, figured --

Ms. Manning. I am happy to be from the State of North Carolina.

Thank you so much, Chairman Meeks and Ranking Member McCaul, for the committee's excellent work on these important measures.

I am proud to support the measures en bloc, which includes my bill H.R. 8503, the Securing Global Telecommunications Act, bipartisan legislation I was proud to introduce with my friend and colleague Representative Young Kim of California.

Mr. Chairman, every day we use and rely on products connected to telecom networks which rely on a nearly invisible set of internationally agreed-upon standards. These products work. And we are able to enjoy them when we can trust that the infrastructure and standards that underpin them are safe and secure, and are not controlled by malign, authoritarian actors.

Our adversaries and strategic competitors would prefer to
dictate our telecommunications infrastructure and technology standards. They want to install Chinese 5G towers and telecom equipment wherever they can. The intent is to gain influence over international standard-setting bodies to provide their own companies, like Huawei and ZTE, an unfair advantage to shut out competitors and to further their countries' geopolitical agendas.

China then abuses this technology to steal data, conduct surveillance, invade our privacy, and undermine a free and open internet. In short, China and Russia are determined to game the system to influence the next generation of critical strategic technologies like 5G and AI. And if we are not vigilant, they may get their wish.

This act will build on the committee's past work, including Ranking Member McCaul's bill, the Promoting United States International Leadership in 5G Act, to further enhance U.S. efforts to promote secure telecommunications infrastructure around the world.

This bill would require the State Department to develop a comprehensive strategy to promote trusted vendors in several categories of critical telecom infrastructure.

It would require the Administration to report to Congress on Chinese and Russian efforts to advance their interests at the International Telecommunications Union.

And it would encourage multilateral collaboration to promote
secure telecom providers, and authorize and codify the existing International Digital Economic and Telecommunications Advisory Committee, and give our American companies a seat at the table.

This bill addresses a significant gap in an area of vital strategic importance. I want to thank my Republican colleague Congresswoman Young Kim, as well as Chairman Meeks, for supporting my focus on this important bipartisan priority.

I also want to urge support for Congressman Ted Deutch's legislation, including a resolution I was proud to help introduce, H.Res. 558, which urges the European Union to designate Hezbollah, in its entirety, as a terrorist organization.

Mr. Chairman, the Iranian-backed terrorist group Hezbollah is responsible for thousands of civilian deaths, not just in the Middle East but around the globe. Until 9/11, Hezbollah had killed more Americans than any other terrorist group.

Today, it maintains an arsenal of 150,000 rockets aimed at Israel.

I am glad the Administration is committed to imposing sanctions on this terrorist network. We would like to see our partners in the EU take a stronger stand against this common threat by designating the organization, as a whole, as a terrorist threat.

And I am grateful to Chairman Deutch for his steadfast leadership on this important issue.

In closing, I urge support for the measure en bloc containing
these important bipartisan bills. And I thank the chairman and the ranking member for their leadership.

I yield back.

Chairman Meeks. The gentlelady yields back.

I now recognize Representative Brad Schneider of Illinois for five minutes.

Mr. Schneider. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Hezbollah is not just a threat to our ally Israel and regional security, they are also a threat to United States national security.

H.Res. 558 would urge the European Union to designate Hezbollah, and in its entirety, as a terrorist organization. The EU designated Hezbollah's military wing as a terrorist organization all the way back in 2013. And there has been notable progress since then in countering Hezbollah activity. But more needs to be done.

This resolution urges the EU to take practical and tangible steps to reduce the terrorist threat posed to the United States, to Europe, to Israel, and our other allies in the Middle East by Hezbollah.

For example, increasing Class 4 intelligence sharing, freezing Hezbollah assets, prohibiting Hezbollah fundraising activities, and issuing arrest warrants for Hezbollah members and supporters in Europe would not only send a strong message,
but would have a concrete impact, inhibiting the ability of Hezbollah to operate with impunity.

There is no distinction between the military and political wings of Hezbollah. And to try to make that distinction is pointless. They are part and parcel of the same entity, and that is a terrorist organization that threatens the United States and our allies, and contributes to instability and violence throughout the Middle East.

I urge my colleagues to support the measure and I -- I urge my colleagues to support the measure.

I also, Mr. Chairman, want to speak in support of H.Res. 744, condemning the Government of Iran's persecution of Baha'i minority. On top of the growing threat to the region, Iran has a long history of blatant human rights violations. For years, the Baha'i community, the largest non-Muslim religious minority in Iran, has been subject to particularly severe religious freedom violations.

There are more than 300,000 Baha'i community members in Iran who have been condemned as heretics by their Government. Since 1979, Iranian authorities have killed or executed more than 200 Baha'i leaders, and more than 10,000 -- 10,000 -- have been dismissed from government and university jobs. More than 850 have been arbitrarily arrested.

It is the duty of the House of Representatives to condemn
Iran's state-sponsored persecution of its Baha'i minority and its continued violation of the International Covenants on Human Rights.

I urge my colleagues to also support this measure.

I support all the measures in this en bloc amendments. And I urge my colleagues to support all of them as well.

I yield back.

Chairman Meeks. The gentleman yields back.

Are there any further, any other members seeking recognition?

Any further members seeking recognition?

Hearing no further requests of recognition, the committee will proceed to consider the noticed items en bloc. Pursuant to the previous order, the question occurs on the measures en bloc, as amended, if amended. And we are going to take a vote by voice.

All members, please unmute your microphones.

All those in favor, say aye.

All those opposed, no.

In the opinion of the chair, the ayes have it. And the measures considered en bloc are agreed to.

And without objection, the motion to reconsider is laid upon the table. Pursuant to the previous order of the committee, each measure is ordered favorably reported, as amended, if amended. And each amendment or amendments to each bill shall be reported.
as a single amendment in the nature of a substitute.

Without objection, staff is authorized to make any technical and conforming changes necessary.

So, now let's move on to the six measures being considered separately.

They are:

H.Res. 922, condemning the use of hunger as a weapon of war and recognizing the effect of conflict on global food security and famine, with the Jacobs amendment in the nature of a substitute, Number 112.

[The Resolution H.Res. 922 follows:]

**********COMMITTEE INSERT**********
Chairman Meeks. H.R. 6498, PEACE through Music Diplomacy Act, with a McCaul amendment in the nature of a substitute, Number 59.

[The Resolution H.Res. 6498 follows:]

**********COMMITTEE INSERT**********
Chairman Meeks. H.R. 7240, Reinforcing Education Accountability in Development Act.

[The Bill H.R. 7240 follows:]

**********COMMITTEE INSERT**********
Chairman Meeks. H.R. 4134, Keeping Girls in School Act,
with a Houlahan amendment in the nature of a substitute, Number 92.

[The Bill H.R. 4134 follows:]

**********COMMITTEEINSERT**********
Chairman Meeks. H.R. 8463, the Millennium Challenge Corporation Eligibility Expansion Act.

[The Bill H.R. 8463 follows:]

**********COMMITTEE INSERT**********
Chairman Meeks. H.R. 6455, Prosper Africa Act, with a McCaul amendment in the nature of a substitute, Number 69.

[The Bill H.R. 6455 follows:]

**********COMMITTEE INSERT**********
Chairman Meeks. So, we will now consider H.Res. 922, condemning the use of hunger as a weapon of war and recognizing the effect of conflict on global food security and famine, with a Jacobs amendment in the nature of a substitute, Number 112.

Pursuant to notice, for purposes of markup, I now call up H.Res. 922. And the clerk will report the resolution.

Ms. Hallman. H.Res. 922, condemning the use of hunger as a weapon of war and recognizing the effect of conflict on global --

Chairman Meeks. Without objection, the first reading of the resolution is dispensed. And the resolution shall be considered as read and open to amendment at any point.

And without objection, the Jacobs amendment in the nature of a substitute, Number 112, circulated to members, shall be considered as read and will be treated as an original text for purposes of an amendment.

At this time, I recognize myself to speak briefly on the measure.

I am a strong supporter of H.Res. 922, a bipartisan resolution condemning the use of hunger as a weapon of war, authored by Representative Jacobs and Representative Meijer.

This timely resolution calls out horrific practices such as starving civilian populations as a weapon of warfare, and the intentional and reckless destruction of tools for food production,
the denial of humanitarian access, and the willful interruption of market systems.

We are seeing it now. Just a few days ago Putin's missiles hit Ukraine's seaport of Odessa just a few hours after a deal to allow grain exports to continue from the port. Russia and Ukraine account for roughly one-third of the world's wheat exports. Ukraine alone accounts for 15 percent of global maize exports, 10 percent of global wheat exports, 13 percent of global barley exports, and 50 percent of global sunflower oil exports which are now imperiled as a result of the brutal Russian invasion.

The world relies on these exports for basic food needs. I support this resolution and encourage my colleagues to do so as well. I realize members wish to speak on the measure, and that some members have amendments to offer.

And I will recognize -- and I yield back the balance of my time.

And I will recognize members in committee seniority, by committee seniority, alternating between Democrats and Republicans for the purpose of speaking on the measure first. If you miss your turn, please let our staff know and we will circle back to you. Then we will move on to amendments.

Do any members wish to speak on the measure?

I recognize Representative Jacobs from the State of
California for five minutes.

Ms. Jacobs. Well, thank you, Mr. Chairman. And thank you to so many of my colleagues here for supporting my resolution condemning the use of hunger as a weapon of war and recognizing the effect of conflict on global food security and famine.

I also want to thank Congressman Meijer for partnering with me on this bipartisan resolution.

Even before the Russian invasion of Ukraine we have seen how climate change, the pandemic, and conflict fueled food crises around the world, in Yemen, Syria, Ethiopia, South Sudan. And now, Russia's invasion has made all of these situations worse.

Putin has repeatedly weaponized food during this war by hitting Odessa, and recently striking the port even after a landmark grain deal was struck just the day before.

But we also have to recognize that we can't only sound the alarm and mobilize aid and attention when and where humanitarian crises affect people who look like us. Around the world, millions are hungry and suffering as a direct result of Putin's relentless pursuit for power.

OXFAM and Save the Children estimate that more than 23 million people in the Horn of Africa are facing extreme hunger because of Russia's invasion.

Afghanistan continues to face an acute humanitarian crisis where 23 million people face severe food insecurity.
Haiti imports 70 percent of its food mainly from Russia and Canada. And today, 45 percent of the Haitian population faces acute hunger.

In Ethiopia, 12 million people in Tigray and Afar are in dire need of humanitarian assistance, and rely on wheat imports from Ukraine and Russia.

In South Sudan, where I just traveled, 12 million people are experiencing severe food insecurity, and 2 million children under the age of five are facing acute malnutrition, the most extreme level of food insecurity in the country since it became independent in 2011.

Just last week I met with World Food Programme Director David Beasley, who told me that actually there is no longer a supply issue, it is an access issue. Meaning we have enough food to feed people around the world and stem these crises, but we have a challenge of logistics, whether that is due to cost, locations, or the direct targeting of agriculture and food transportation hubs.

That is why it is so important that we, as a body, recognize these impacts, condemn starvation of civilians as a weapon of war, and call on the United States Government here in Congress and in the Administration to continue addressing these crises and hold perpetrators accountable.

I am proud to lead this important resolution today. And
I urge my colleagues to support it.

I yield back the balance of my time.

Chairman Meeks. The gentlelady yields back the balance of time.

I now recognize Representative David Cicilline of Rhode Island for five minutes.

Mr. Cicilline. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Vladimir Putin's grotesque, repugnant, illegal war on the people of Ukraine has once again exposed the fragility of global food systems and the need for there to be robust interagency plan to limit the impact that tyrants like Putin can have on ensuring that people of the world, the child in vulnerable states, do not suffer enduring hunger.

I strongly support House Resolution 922 offered by my friend, Representative Jacobs, and thank her for her extraordinary leadership on this issue and this excellent resolution which condemns the use of hunger as a weapon of war.

It shocks and stirs the conscious that we need to signal to the world proactively starving innocent civilians in order to meet foreign policy goals is a reprehensible crime. But after Vladimir Putin demonstrated as recently as five days ago by bombing the Port of Odessa hours after agreeing to a grain compromise, we must.

No twisted delusion of grandeur held by a man like Vladimir
Putin should come between a child and a warm meal.

No war criminal like Vladimir Putin should stand between assistance to the poor, and the aged, and the indigent. Indeed, no one should grow thin or emaciated because they live in a time of a deranged oppressor.

So, I ask my colleagues to join me in supporting this legislation so that we might work for ending manmade hunger as a result of war, and condemn in the strongest terms the use of starvation as a weapon of war.

And I again want to end where I began, by thanking Congresswoman Jacobs for her extraordinary leadership on this issue.

And I yield back.

Chairman Meeks. The gentleman yields back.

Any other members wish to speak on this measure?

Anybody else wish to speak on this measure?

Hearing no further requests, let's move on to amendments.

Are there any amendments?

Mr. Perry of Pennsylvania.

Mr. Cicilline. Mr. Chairman, I reserve a point of order.

Chairman Meeks. A point of order is reserved.

What number?

Mr. Perry. 744, Mr. Chairman.

[The Amendment offered by Mr. Perry follows:]
Chairman Meeks. Clerk, please distribute the amendment to your staff virtually. And let's pause to give members a chance to review the amendment.

Has everyone received a copy of the amendment? Clerk, please report the amendment.

Ms. Hallman. Perry Amendment Number 744 to the amendment in the nature of a substitute to H.Res. 922.

In the first clause of the preamble --

Chairman Meeks. Without objection, further reading of the amendment will be dispensed with.

The Representative from Pennsylvania is recognized for five minutes in support of the amendment.

Mr. Perry. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

This amendment simply recognizes reality, that COVID-19 didn't worsen the already-occurring and rising global food insecurity. It was the unscientific and unnecessary lockdowns in reaction to the virus. The virus didn't cause layoffs and unemployment. The virus didn't cause increased poverty. The virus didn't cause supply chain disruptions.

The lockdowns imposed significant economic costs around the world, likely among those who are the most vulnerable.

Again, this amendment simply places the emphasis on the true culprit. I urge support.

And I yield the balance.
Chairman Meeks. The gentleman gives back his time.

I now recognize myself for five minutes.

I oppose this amendment because COVID-19 has had massive direct effects on populations around the world. The facts are that over a million Americans have died, and millions more globally. Countries, rightly, have to take the necessary steps to protect their citizens.

And I yield back the balance of my time.

Is there any further debate on the amendment?

Representative Jacobs, five minutes.

Ms. Jacobs. I oppose this amendment because it is not based in truth. The facts of COVID-19 are well-documented all over the world, have undoubtedly played a key role in worsening global food insecurities.

COVID-19 has reduced incomes, has disrupted food supply chains, and it has doubled the number of food insecure people from before the pandemic.

I yield back.

Chairman Meeks. The gentlelady yields back.

Any further debate on the amendment?

Hearing no further requests to speak, the question is on the Perry amendment designated Number 744. We are going to take a vote by voice.

All members please unmute your microphones.
All those in favor, say aye.

All those opposed, no.

In the opinion of the chair, the nays have it. And the amendment is not agreed to.

And without objection, the motion to reconsider is laid upon the table.

For what purpose does the Representative from Pennsylvania, Mr. Perry, seek recognition?

Mr. Perry. Mr. Chairman, I have got an amendment at the desk, Number 753.

[The Amendment offered by Mr. Perry follows:]

**********COMMITTEE INSERT**********
Mr. Cicilline. Mr. Chairman, I reserve a point of order.

Mr. Chairman, I reserve a point of order.

Chairman Meeks. A point of order is reserved.

The clerk shall distribute the amendment virtually.

Has everyone received a copy of the amendment?

The clerk will please report the amendment.

Ms. Hallman. Perry Amendment Number 753 to the amendment in the nature of a substitute to H.Res. 922.

Chairman Meeks. Without objection, further reading of the amendment will be dispensed with.

And the Representative from Pennsylvania, Mr. Perry, is now recognized for five minutes in support of his amendment.

Mr. Perry. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

This amendment stipulated that crisis modifiers used in existing USAID programs shall be used specifically to divert, decrease, or cease programming.

I know many folks here will say that these crisis modifiers are only used to divert or cease programming. I acknowledge that there are situations, like in Afghanistan, where it is helpful to have a mechanism to immediately stop or divert funding. I mean, we certainly don't want to continue sending funding to the enemy that just took over in a place like that.

However, crisis modifiers have never, have never been used to increase funding. I think the text I am offering today is
a good compromise.

And again, that text is, and I quote, "Ensuring existing interagency strategies, crisis response efforts, and ongoing programs consider, integrate, and adapt to address conflict by utilizing crisis modifiers in the United States Agency for International Development program to respond to rapid shock and stress, such as the willful targeting of food systems by diverting, decreasing, or ceasing funding."

Not doing anything that it doesn't already do. We are just clarifying so that it doesn't go the other direction. That is all we are doing. That is all I am asking to do. And so, it should be easy for everybody to support that.

With that, Mr. Chairman, I yield back.

Mr. Cicilline. Will the gentleman yield for a question?

Mr. Perry. Certainly.

Mr. Cicilline. So, your amendment says, adds language "by diverting, decreasing, or ceasing assistance." It doesn't actually speak about funding. And so if there is different assistance that would be an appropriate response, USAID would not be permitted to do it.

That seems like a very bad idea.

Mr. Perry. As I understand, as I am reading it to you, "by diverting, decreasing, or ceasing funding."

Mr. Cicilline. No, that is not.
It says "ceasing assistance."

Mr. Perry. All right. Then I am not sure which one of us stands corrected. I see what the amendment says, but I am seeing what my text says here.

I appear to stand corrected.

Mr. Cicilline. Does that mean you will withdraw the amendment?

Mr. Perry. I am fine with "ceasing funding" or "assistance."

Mr. Cicilline. Well, "funding" is not there at all.

Mr. Perry. Okay. I am fine with "ceasing assistance."

Mr. Cicilline. But I guess that was my question. If you are saying "ceasing assistance," if they make a determination that a different kind of assistance --

Mr. Perry. Okay. Then --

Mr. Cicilline. -- would be entitled, you would not want to preclude that from happening.

Mr. Perry. Fair enough then. Would you accept the amendment if it said "ceasing funding" as opposed to "assistance"?

Mr. Cicilline. No. I think that is an equally dumb idea, frankly, with all due respect.

But certainly this one I think is particularly harmful because it doesn't even allow the agency to make modifications in what kind of assistance might be useful. It seems to me that doesn't serve the interests of the American people.
Mr. Perry. All it does is say -- essentially all this does is agree with already, what is already there, which says we are not going to increase, using the modifiers to increase.

And I don't know why anybody has a problem with that, with that idea. We are just saying you shouldn't use the modifiers to increase these things. And if they have always been used to decrease, then we all should be on the same page.

But it seems to me that somebody is actually interested in increasing it, but they don't want to say that.

I yield, Chairman.

Mr. Cicilline. I mean, I have tremendous confidence in USAID. So, I, I am not concerned about them using modifiers inappropriately.

You seem to suggest that somehow increasing assistance is problematic. It may, in fact, advance the interests of the United States and the mission of the agency.

Mr. Perry. All I am saying is --

Mr. Cicilline. I am not sure why we would want to restrict it.

Mr. Perry. All I am saying is using the crisis modifiers. Should only be used to divert or cease programs.

Mr. Cicilline. But where do you get that notion, I guess? You have made a limitation on crisis modifiers that you think is consistent with your view of it. But where does that come
from other than a general notice that USAID should do less?

Mr. Perry. I am not saying it should do less. I am just saying that should use the crisis -- it should use the crisis modifiers, so you have got a crisis somewhere, like in Afghanistan where the enemy has taken over, we don't want to send them more money. We don't want to send them more aid.

Mr. Cicilline. I think if you look at the beginning of that paragraph you say, "calls on the United States Government to prioritize diplomatic efforts to call out and address instances where hunger and intentional deprivation of food is being utilized as a weapon of war, to make efforts to ensure that security efforts do not undermine livelihoods of local populations, to minimize harm."

And then you go to C: Ensure that existing interagency strategies, crisis response efforts, and ongoing programs consider, integrate, and adapt to address conflicts by utilizing crisis modifiers of the United States Agency for International Development programs to respond to rapid shock and stress.

Chairman Meeks. The gentleman's time has expired.

Anyone else seek recognition?

Mr. Mast. Representative Mast.

Chairman Meeks. First, let me just say this. I recognize myself.

I oppose this amendment. This amendment is not applicable
to this cause. Number one, because USAID is not authorized to
cease assistance.
This resolution already addresses actions to be taken to
hold individuals, governments, militias, and/or entities
responsible for using hunger as a weapon in conflict.
I yield back the balance of my time.

Who seeks recognition?
Mr. Mast. Representative Mast.
Chairman Meeks. Representative Mast is recognized for five
minutes.
Mr. Mast. Yes, thank you, Mr. Chairman.
I am going to yield as much time as my colleague Mr. Perry
may need to him. But after, if there is any time remaining I
would be curious to hear you expand just a little bit on your
last statement, Mr. Chairman, saying that USAID is not at their
leisure to cease assistance. I would be curious to just hear
more about it, if there is a remainder of time.
But I yield to Representative Perry.
Mr. Perry. I thank the, I thank the gentleman from Florida.
Text is "ensuring that existing interagency strategies,
crisis response efforts, and ongoing programs consider,
integrate, and adapt to address conflict by utilizing crisis
modifiers in the United States Agency for International
Development Program to respond to rapid shock and stress, such
as the willful targeting of food systems by diverting, decreasing," and as the amendment reads, "ceasing assistance."

All the amendment seeks to do is make sure that we don't use the opportunity of crisis modifiers, of crisis modifiers -- that is the point, the crisis modifier -- to increase these activities. That is all it seeks to do.

I am not saying it has ever been done before. To my knowledge it never has been done before. But I would make the point that since it has never been done before, that we should have no problem with this amendment.

And with that, Mr. Chairman, I don't know if you want to entertain Mr. Mast's question, but I yield the balance of that time to you.

Chairman Meeks. Well, I would just say that Congress is the authorizer. They are just the authorizer, not USAID.

Mr. Mast. Mr. Chairman.

Chairman Meeks. Yes?

Mr. Mast. Mr. Chairman, like I said, I was just generally curious on what you were saying. You are saying that USAID, the administrators there, they, if they see something happening on the ground, somebody that is there providing something, whatever the case may be, pick your hypothetical situations, they don't have the authority to, let's call it stop delivery or, or anything more broad than that? Obviously, it could be far more broad than
But is that, is that what you are saying?

Chairman Meeks. I am just saying that they could come back to Congress, but Congress ultimately makes the determination of what is authorized and what is not.

Mr. Mast. I am not trying to pigeonhole you into something. I am really just generally wondering.

Somebody on the ground doesn't have the authority, you are saying, to stop that without an act of Congress?

Chairman Meeks. Well, I am saying that, yes, I am saying that Congress ultimately has the jurisdiction to determine, to authorize, and/or to cut off authorization.

Mr. Mast. Certainly. And I agree with that. I understand that we administer that.

What I am wondering is does somebody on the ground have the authority to, let's say, pump the brakes on something being delivered?

Chairman Meeks. I believe that is what they would be recommendations and what would come from the organization. If there is something that they do not need or utilize, they would come, or not by, or not authorized, and say you don't need it and, therefore, that money would be reserved in their cache.

But complete, sort of clear that complete authorization is done by, done by the Congress.
Ms. Jacobs. If Mr. Mast would yield.

Mr. Mast. I would yield. That is what I am curious on.

Mr. Cicilline. I think maybe the reason that this is difficult to follow, maybe Mr. Perry doesn't mean this, but the current language says to ensure existing interagency strategies, crisis response efforts, and ongoing programs consider, integrate, and adapt to address conflict by utilizing crisis modifiers in the USAID programming.

Crisis modifiers bring together the worlds of both development and humanitarian assistance. There are financing mechanisms within the development program.

So, basically, the sentence wouldn't make any sense if you say bring together these two missions for purpose of responding to the crisis.

Oh, and by the way, you can't do so by diverting, decreasing, or ceasing assistance. It is exactly for that purpose that you are able to respond to a crisis by bringing together these two functionalities and this financing program to do it in the most cost-effective way and the way that has the greatest impact.

That is the purpose of USAID.

I think this is a clumsy effort to limit that, which I think would be -- really undermine the direct mission of USAID.

And I urge everyone to vote against the amendment.

Mr. Mast. I will regain my time here.
And I think it is something that we should be looking at, you know, more broadly is our capability for very direct oversight over any assistance. I can't pretend that I do just automatically trust those that are working at USAID to, to utilize the taxpayer dollars well.

I will just leave it at that.

My time has expired. I yield back.

Chairman Meeks. The gentleman's time has expired.

Any further debate on the amendment?

Ms. Jacobs from California.

Ms. Jacobs. Well, thank you.

Yeah, I just want to say that this amendment is very confusing, and also unnecessary and duplicative, because we already have language about holding people accountable in the very next clause. And it encourages the United States Government to use tools like the Global Magnitsky Act sanctions if they needed to hold people accountable for using hunger as a weapon of war.

I also think, to answer your previous question, Mr. Mast, it would be a violation of either the Antideficiency Act or the Impoundment Act, depending which account it comes from, for the Executive Branch to not spend money that Congress has authorized.

And so, it would have to come back to us for that to happen.

So, we maintain control of that.

With that, I --
Mr. Mast. Would you yield, Ms. Jacobs?

Mr. Jacobs. Sure.

Mr. Mast. Yeah, and again, I just think this is a bigger conversation that we should be having as Congress about playing a larger role in each of those USAID authorizations, more specifically. But I understand that there are people that work there in the agency, might simply wish for Congress do that, that we would hold the purse strings, that we would be accountable users of the taxpayers' dollars by not just sending it to the USAID agency but really, I guess people don't like to be micromanaged, but micromanaging them a bit more.

And I thank you for yielding to me a moment.

Mr. Jacobs. Well, thank you.

I think many would argue that given the amount of mandatory spending requirements and earmarks we put in the USAID budget we already do micromanage how they spend their money.

But I will look forward to potentially working with you on some solutions to that in the USAID authorizations, though, that our committee will be working on.

I yield back, Mr. Chair.

Chairman Meeks. The gentlelady yields back.

Any further debate on the amendment?

Hearing no further requests to speak, the question is on the Perry amendment designated 753.
We are going to take a vote by voice.
All members please unmute your microphones.
All those in favor, say aye.
All those opposed, no.
In the opinion of the chair, the nays have it. And the amendment is not agreed to.
Without objection, the motion to reconsider is laid upon the table.
For what purpose does the Representative from Pennsylvania, Mr. Perry, seek recognition?
Mr. Perry. Mr. Chairman, I have an amendment at the desk, Number 754.
[The Amendment offered by Mr. Perry follows:]

**********COMMITTEE INSERT**********
Mr. Cicilline. Chairman, I reserve a point of order.

Chairman Meeks. A point of order is reserved.
And the clerk shall distribute the amendment.
Has everyone received a copy of the amendment?
The clerk shall report the amendment.

Ms. Hallman. Perry Amendment Number 754 to the amendment in the nature of a substitute to H.Res. 922.

At the appropriate point --
Chairman Meeks. Without objection, further reading of the amendment will be dispensed with.

The Representative from Pennsylvania, Mr. Perry, is now recognized for five minutes in support of his amendment.

Mr. Perry. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

This amendment simply adds the following clause to the bill.

"Whereas the pursuit of some so-called sustainable agricultural practices, specifically blanket bans of synthetic fertilizer and pesticides, and prohibitions on fossil fuels, can lead to or worsen global food shortages."

This amendment highlights the horrific circumstances that led to the complete collapse of the economy of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka, resulting in widespread unrest and the resignation of the president and prime minister of the country.

The Sri Lankan Government sacrificed the prosperity and
well-being of its people in order to win over the approval of the green Western elites, obtaining a nearly perfectly ESG score of 98.1.

Among other green reforms, Sri Lanka instituted a ban on chemical fertilizers in an effort to promote organic farming in April of 2021. That is a year ago, a little over a year ago.

In announcing their intentions, the minister of the environment stated that they were saving the planet from our own geo-engineering misuse, greed, and selfishness.

By November of 2021, the ban was lifted but the damage was already done. The nation had decimated its primary source of income, and its economy completely collapsed, with officials declaring bankruptcy earlier this month. The economic toll of this decision, driven by western elites, is absolutely devastating.

According to the U.N. Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, the ban had a disastrous impact on agricultural productivity and production, resulting in an estimated 40 to 50 percent reduction for the past season. They also noted that the production devastation will continue into the next cultivation season, as only 24 percent of the usually worked land has been cultivated for the upcoming season.

The economic devastation resulted in inflation levels of 54.5 percent in June, with food prices rising over 80 percent,
and transportation over 128 percent since May. And half a million
people have sunk into poverty as early as 20 -- as early as 2022.

This is a devastating reminder of the human impact of the
paternalistic, colonialist efforts of the Western elites to force
developing nations to sacrifice their prosperity for our green
goals. It is vital that this committee recognize the devastating
impact of these policies that they have on global food supply
and stop this madness.

This amendment would do exactly that. I urge support.

And I yield the balance.

Mr. Cicilline. Mr. Chairman, I wish to be heard on my point
of order.

Chairman Meeks. You may proceed.

Mr. Cicilline. Mr. Chairman, this amendment is about
sustainable agriculture. But the bill is about using hunger as
a weapon of war. The amendment is not germane and introduces
a new and wholly irrelevant issue to the resolution.

Chairman Meeks. The chair is prepared to rule.

The gentleman is correct, this amendment is not germane
because this resolution is about the use of hunger as a weapon
of war. And all of the "whereas" clauses mention conflict or
warfare. It is not about the merits or lack thereof of sustainable
agriculture, meaning the amendment introduces a subject matter
in violation of Rule 16 of the House of Representatives.
Thus, the point of order is sustained and the amendment fails -- falls I should say.

Are there other amendments?

Representative Perry is recognized.

Mr. Perry. Mr. Chairman, Amendment Number 755 is at the desk.

[The Amendment offered by Mr. Perry follows:]

**********COMMITTEE INSERT**********
Mr. Cicilline.  Mr. Chairman, I reserve a point of order.

Chairman Meeks.  A point of order is reserved.

The clerk shall distribute the amendment.

Clerk, please report the amendment.

Ms. Hallman.  Perry Amendment Number 755 to the amendment in the nature of a substitute to H.Res. --

Chairman Meeks.  Without objection, further reading of the amendment will be dispensed with.

And the Representative from Pennsylvania, Mr. Perry, is now recognized.

Mr. Perry.  Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

This amendment inserts a "resolved" clause that the U.S. Government should use its influence, voice, and a vote at international financial institutions to discourage the adoption of sustainable agricultural practices, including the prohibition of the use of synthetic fertilizer and restricting the use of traditional energy sources.

Similar to the last statement and amendment, this amendment highlights the destructive synthetic fertilizer ban pursued by the Sri Lankan Government at the risk of contagion if the U.S. Government does not put its foot down and object to the international financial institutions coercing other developing nations down this road.

Again, despite the fact that the fertilizer ban was only
in place for 8 months, it drove the Sri Lankan economy to complete
collapse, reduced production by 50 to 60 percent, and has resulted
in less than a quarter of usable land being cultivated for the
upcoming season.

This led to an 80 percent spike in food prices, and an overall
inflation rate of 56 percent, dropping over half a million people
into poverty.

Despite the obvious impacts of the policies that drove the
Government into bankruptcy at the beginning of July, the Sri Lankan
Government signed a green energy taxonomy with the International
Finance Corporation in May of this year that included a commitment
to organic fertilizers, among other things.

The continued push to impose top-down prohibitions on farmers
at the behest of international financial institutions and the
green Western elite, has, and will continue to destroy prosperity
in the developing world, limiting already scarce global food
supplies, and resulting in the untimely deaths of tens of
thousands, if not more.

Likewise, the assault on reliable electricity projects at
IFI that started under the Obama Administration, and resumed under
the Biden Administration, has plunged millions into electricity
scarcity and precluded rapid development across the world.

The wholesale export of these regressive policies to the
developing world is a reprehensible attempt to preclude these
countries from developing their natural resources and providing their citizens access to reliable electric grids and the significant benefits that offers in terms of quality and length of life.

Condemning these nations to inefficient and costly renewable energy source by slave labor represents the worst kind of neocolonialist elitism the West has to offer. It is abundantly clear that we cannot continue to push this immoral, ideologically-driven mind set without precluding the further development, and costing lives, yet that is exactly what the majority in this Administration seeks to do.

Enough is enough. Let these folks access the benefits of modern life and develop their countries as they see fit, not subject them to the whims of the global green elite.

This amendment would clearly establish a U.S. policy, opposition to these ridiculous, life-threatening policies at international financial institutions.

I urge my colleagues to adopt the amendment.

And I yield the balance.

Chairman Meeks. The gentleman yields the balance of his time.

Mr. Cicilline. Mr. Chairman, I wish to press my point of order.

This amendment is a violation of Rule 10 of the House of
Representatives because it concerns international financial institutions, which are not the appropriate jurisdiction of this committee and are properly the jurisdiction of the Financial Services Committee. Therefore, despite Mr. Perry's keen interest, I will prevent us from considering this amendment.

Chairman Meeks. The chair is prepared to rule.

The gentleman is correct. The amendment pertains to international financial institutions, which are appropriately within the jurisdiction of the Financial Services Committee. Therefore, the amendment is a violation of Rule 10 of the House of Representatives, and we cannot consider it.

We are going to take a vote by voice on the Jacobs amendment in the nature of a substitute designated 112 to H.Res. 922.

The question is now on the Jacobs amendment in the nature of a substitute designated 112.

We are going to take a vote by voice.

All members please unmute your microphone.

All those in favor, say aye.

All opposed, no.

In the opinion of the chair, the ayes have it.

And without objection, the motion to reconsider is laid upon the table. The amendment in the nature of a substitute is adopted.

The question to report H.Res. 922 is amended. And with the recommendation that the resolution do pass, as amended.
We are going to take a vote by voice.

All members, please, again unmute your microphone.

All those in favor, say aye.

All opposed, no.

In the opinion of the chair, the ayes have it. And without objection, the motion to reconsider is laid upon the table.

The measure is ordered favorably reported, as amended.

We now consider H.R. 6498, the PEACE through Music Diplomacy Act, with a McCaul amendment in the nature of a substitute, Number 59.

Pursuant to notice, the purposes of markup, for purposes of markup I now call up H.R. 6498, the PEACE through Music Diplomacy Act.

The clerk will report the bill.

Ms. Hallman. H.R. 6498, to authorize music-related exchange programs facilitated by the Department of State --

Chairman Meeks. Without objection, the first reading of the bill is dispensed with. And the bill shall be considered as read and open to amendment at any point.

And without objection, the McCaul amendment in the nature of a substitute, Number 59, circulated to members, shall be considered as read. It will be treated as original text for purposes of amendment.

At this time I recognize myself to speak briefly on the
First, let me thank Ranking Member McCaul and Chairman Deutch for drafting this very important bill. And I am thrilled to support it.

This bill does many things. It authorizes music-related exchange programs. It encourages the private sector to engage in these programs. And it calls on the State Department to come up with a strategy that advances conflict resolution and peace building efforts through music-related exchange programs.

Most importantly, the bill highlights the role of music in diplomacy. Music is unifying, universal, and it can be healing. Music is a part of every culture, and found in all parts of the world.

People-to-people musical exchanges are powerful tools that can be used to spread American values, diminish conflict, and build cross-cultural understanding to advance peace abroad.

And I happen to have seen myself, going to a concert, where you had two conflicting countries but they had music. They had different performers from each country. And it had that feeling of bringing them together. It is, indeed, universal. And we should encourage that kind of diplomacy.

And that is why I ask everyone to join me in supporting this bill put forth by Mr. McCaul and Mr. Deutch.

I yield back the balance of my time.
Any other members wish to speak on this measure?

Ms. Wagner from Missouri.

Mrs. Wagner. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I would also like to register my strong support for the ranking member's bill, the PEACE through Music Act. And urge all of my colleagues to support it.

Cultural exchanges, they are the cornerstone of effective diplomacy and the key to building mutual trust and partnership through pure appreciation of your counterparts' history, their music, and their culture is a difference between a good diplomat and a great diplomat.

When I had the privilege to represent the United States of America as U.S. Ambassador to Luxembourg, I found that music was an essential element of conducting diplomacy. I invited musicians and artists to join every dinner and event as possible. Because it was that important in terms of the work that I needed to do on behalf of the United States Government.

My Luxembourgeois counterparts and I may have disagreed on certain policy matters -- and we frequently did -- but we all agreed on music, art, and culture. It was something on which we could build trust and accord.

And every diplomat knows that the global dominance of American culture, especially our music, significantly extends the reach of the State Department in every city and in every world
-- and across the world, American songs by American artists play, in stores and restaurants, at dinner parties, and on the street corners, and over the radio. It is hard to overstate the importance of music in contributing to a global understanding of our optimistic and joyful culture, our openness, and our dynamism.

The ranking member's bill authorizes the State Department's highly effective music exchange programs, and encourages State to draw from the private sector of expertise in designing and carrying out these programs. Through these programs the State Department is able to reach thousands of young people, teaching the next generation to appreciate the power and importance of cultural diplomacy.

I would urge my colleagues to vote in support of the PEACE through Music Act.

And I will yield back, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman Meeks. The gentlelady yields back the balance of her time.

Do other members wish to speak on the bill?

Mr. Deutch. Mr. Chairman.

Chairman Meeks. Mr. Deutch is recognized for five minutes.

Mr. Deutch. Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I am honored to join Ranking Member McCaul as the Democratic co-lead for the PEACE through Music Diplomacy Act, which
authorizes the State Department to implement music-related exchange programs, including those that promote diplomacy, and direct the State Department to leverage our music industry's expertise and resources when it comes to designing and executing these programs.

As few members of this committee would know, I lead the Congressional Songwriters' Caucus. I spent years advocating for musicians of Congress. I have met across Congress who have devoted their lives to creating the music that we love, moreover, the music that people all around the world love and enjoy.

I have spent my time here in Congress, among other things, working to enhance America's ability to promote diplomacy. And have had the occasion even to play music on trips overseas with my colleagues.

This bill, this piece of legislation allows us to leverage the power of music as a common language, one that can transcend borders and cultures, and language differences, as well as the expertise and resources of the U.S. music industry to strengthen our ability to promote diplomacy, peace, and prosperity.

This is a good piece of bipartisan legislation. I urge my colleagues to support it.

And I yield back the balance of my time.

Chairman Meeks. The gentleman yields back.

Any further requests to speak?
Mr. Cicilline of Rhode Island, five minutes.

Mr. Cicilline. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I, too, would like to congratulate Mr. Deutch on this legislation, and the ranking member.

Music has a unique ability to move us and inspire us. Music knows no bounds and is not constrained by any border. Music speaks to us as the most universal language of all. And music can take us back to the moments that matter most in our life.

Music is the very essence of life itself in so many ways.

Six decades ago, Rhode Island's own Claiborne Pell recognized the transformative power of the arts and music and wrote the legislation that would establish the National Endowment for the Arts and the National Endowment for Humanities.

Senator Pell understood that America's artists could touch the lives of not only their fellow citizens but people around the world. He knew that art and music could erode divisions and bring each of us close together. And he understood that art is a mirror in which to view our own fundamental humanity, and that through billions sharing the experience of art and music lasting peace is ever more possible.

Now, the PEACE through Music Diplomacy Act, H.R. 6498, offered by Mr. Deutch and Ranking Member McCaul, echoes that same fundamental belief. The United States is the proud home of many of the world's most talented singers, songwriters, musicians,
dance companies, and composers. The world is home to many more. This will allow the State Department and nations around the world to give the global community the gift of music so that music may bring us closer together and closer to peace.

And as I was thinking about this legislation, in so many ways it reflects the great symphony of Congressman Deutch's work here in Congress. The commitment that he has always had to music, and music creators, and recognizing the value of the creation of songwriters, and fighting so relentlessly that they be properly compensated, and his enduring legacy of fighting for peace not only in the Middle East but all around the world.

So, this in many ways, this piece of legislation brings together two of the most important pieces of work that Congressman Deutch has worked on while in Congress and nearing the end of his service. And I think it is a really magnificent way to honor him by passing this piece of legislation so that music may continue to be heard around the world and peace reigns forever.

And I yield back.

Chairman Meeks. The gentleman yields back. Any further members wish to speak?

Hearing no further requests, let's move on to amendments. For what purpose does the Representative from Pennsylvania, Mr. Perry, seek recognition?

Mr. Perry. Mr. Chairman, I request unanimous consent to
withdraw the amendments I have on this bill.

Chairman Meeks. Without objection Perry amendments on this bill are withdrawn.

Hearing no further requests to speak, we are going to take a vote by voice.

All please unmute your microphone.

Mr. Wilson. And I feel bad for some staffer who spent a lot of time.

Mr. Issa. Can we hear an aye?

Mr. Mast. I hear you, Mr. Issa.

Mr. Deutch. Gilbert & Sullivan from The Ambassador, please.

Chairman Meeks. The question is on McCaul amendment designated Number 59.

A recorded vote is ordered. A voice vote is ordered.

Please unmute your microphone.

All those in favor, say aye.

All those opposed, no.

In the opinion of the chair, the ayes have it.

The question is now to report H.R. 6498, as amended, with the recommendation that the bill do pass, as amended.

Again, we are going to take a vote by voice.

All members please unmute your microphone.

All those in favor, say aye.

All opposed, no.
Chairman Meeks. In the opinion of the chair, the ayes have it.

Mr. Perry. Mr. Chairman, I request a recorded vote.

Chairman Meeks. A recorded vote is ordered. A recorded vote is ordered.

Please mute your microphone.

The question is to report H.R. 6498, with the recommendation -- We are going to roll this vote till tomorrow.

All votes are being recorded. We are going to roll this vote till tomorrow. We will probably call it for the end of markup.

We now consider H.R. 7240, the Reinforcing Education Accountability in Development Act.

Pursuant to notice, for purposes of markup, I now call up H.R. 7240. The clerk shall report the bill.

Ms. Hallman. H.R. 7240, to reauthorize the READ Act. Be it enacted --

[The Bill H.R. 7240 follows:]

**********COMMITTEE INSERT**********
Chairman Meeks. Without objection, the first reading of the bill is dispensed with and the bill shall be considered as read and open to amendment at any point.

At this time, I recognize myself to speak briefly on the measure. I want to thank Chairwoman Bass and Ranking Member Smith for drafting this important and timely bill, and I am excited to support it.

The READ Act was first signed into law in 2017. It required USAID to create a 5-year comprehensive strategy to promote quality basic education in partner countries by expanding access to basic education for all children and measurably improve the quality of basic education and learning outcomes.

The bill before us today is calling for a simple 5-year extension of the READ Act, which would allow USAID to update their comprehensive strategy to address new and emerging issues we face today.

As we continue to confront the COVID-19 pandemic, continuing and expanding access to education must be a top priority. Around the world millions of kids were unable to attend schedule due to the pandemic. We must reauthorize the READ Act to adopt to these new challenges and help forge a strong and more educated future for children everywhere. And to do that, we are making for a better world.

We don't know. Those children, once they are given the
opportunity to learn and be educated, could be the next leaders. They could be the next ones -- next scientists, the next doctors, that can solve and help resolve some of the many issues that we still face.

And so we cannot allow certain things like COVID-19 pandemic and other things that have prevented some the opportunity to continue that education. It is a way to having a better world, and so I ask all the members to please join me in supporting this bill.

Are there any other members that wish to speak on this measure?

Ms. Bass. Mr. Chair?

Chairman Meeks. Yes. Who seeks recognition?


Chairman Meeks. Chairwoman Bass is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. Bass. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I appreciate this opportunity to speak on this issue, and I would like to note the significant number of measures affecting Africa. I am encouraged to see my colleagues address several significant issues for the continent.

Today I am bringing H.R. 7240, the READ Act, to the Committee for consideration. This bipartisan bill co-led by Africa Subcommittee Ranking Member Chris Smith is a straightforward
reauthorization of the Reinforcing Education Accountability in Development Act of 2017, which was signed into law in the 115th Congress.

The original Act required a 5-year comprehensive strategy to access -- to expand access to basic education for children around the globe and measurably improve the quality of basic education and learning outcomes with a specific focus on supporting the most vulnerable children.

My legislation would extend that authorization by an additional 5 fiscal years. The authors of the original READ Act, Senators Durbin and Rubio, have introduced companion legislation to reauthorize it for an additional 5 years as well.

It is the policy of the U.S., as implemented in the READ Act, to work with partner countries, other donors, multilateral institutions, the private sector, and non-governmental and civil society organizations, including faith-based organizations, to promote quality basic education through programs and activities.

Since the Act's implementation, we have begun to see significant progress in building the foundational skills necessary for students to thrive and succeed in their educational endeavors. For example, in Fiscal Year 2021 alone, U.S. basic education programs reached more than 33 million pre-primary, primary, and secondary students in 73 countries, and more than 1 million additional individuals with tertiary, vocational, and
The READ Act also required the President to submit a comprehensive U.S. strategy to promote basic education. The U.S. Government strategy on international basic education emerged from this effort and was designed to promote basic education in partner countries for all children, particularly children from vulnerable groups, and measurably improve the quality of basic education and achievement of key learning outcomes.

This strategy has been carried out by USAID through a senior coordinator of international basic education since 2017. Since the launch of the U.S. strategy on international basic education, agencies and departments have created indicators in streamlined yearly reporting to Congress, launched the first international basic education website that includes information across all U.S. agencies involved in supporting basic education worldwide.

The website highlights agency updates and resources, including yearly public reports to Congress, and increased coordination by establishing a process for sharing research tools and resources, specifically by working with USAID missions to increase coordination across federal agencies with stakeholders to better leverage taxpayer dollars.

For example, when implementing the McGovern-Dole Food for Education Program, USAID serves as a subject matter expect in literacy promotion while USDA provides school meals and funding
for teacher trainings and school construction, among other things, that boost school enrollment and academic performance of preschool and primary students.

Although the READ Act has seen initial success, our partners at USAID and other federal agencies require time to update the strategy and adapt it to new and emerging issues in global education, such as COVID-19 pandemic, which closed schools and resulted in learning loss around the world.

USAID has begun consulting implementing partners and think tanks at the working and local levels to update the strategy, and they plan to have a full rollout by September. This update will focus on equitable learning outcomes and joint reporting on global learning poverty from COVID-19, among other issues.

I encourage your support -- I also encourage your support of H. Res. 922 condemning the use of hunger as a weapon of war as the Horn of Africa and the Sahel face one of the greatest food insecurity challenges across the globe in recent memory.

I further encourage your support for the MCC Eligibility Expansion Act, so that MCC can reach more developing countries to meet its mission and for Keeping Girls in School Act, to establish secondary education programming at USAID for adolescent girls worldwide.

And I yield the balance of my time.

Chairman Meeks. The gentlelady yields the balance of her
time.

Any further requests to speak? Hearing none, we will move on to amendments. For what purpose does the Representative from Pennsylvania, Mr. Perry, seek recognition?

Mr. Perry. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have an amendment at the desk, Number 747.

Chairman Meeks. The clerk shall distribute the amendment. Has everyone received a copy of the amendment?

Without objection, further reading of the -- oops. Clerk shall report the amendment.

Ms. Hallman. Perry Amendment Number 747 to H.R. 7240, at the end of the bill add the following --

[The Amendment offered by Mr. Perry follows:]

**********COMMITTEE INSERT**********
Chairman Meeks. Without objection, further reading of the amendment will be dispensed with. The Representative from Pennsylvania, Mr. Perry, is now recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. Perry. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. This amendment adds context that is much needed for our conversations about the now-continued programs authorized by the READ Act, the effect of COVID-19 lockdowns on access to and quality of basic education and learning outcomes.

I think it is hard for anybody, except perhaps maybe Randi Weingarten, to deny that -- deny that lockdowns have had an enormous impact on children's educational and social development. Anecdotally, I know many of us got or continue--got or continue to have Zoom fatigue.

However, judging by the number of members participating in hearings virtually, it is clear that not all of us do. Imagine being a kid. You are used to moving around a classroom or from class to class, going to lunch and recess and gym and seeing your friends. Instead, you are forced to spend a year or more sitting at home staring at a grid of faces on a screen, unable to have separate chats with your friends, or make new friends for that matter.

For younger kids who are still learning, language and speech skills must surely pose a hurdle for many. While telehealth was an option for some, preliminary studies from both the United States
and other parts of the world show a significant impact on speech and language development among children. This amendment requires a report, simply a report by the Department of State on the issue, including the impact of lockdowns on school attendance, retention, and completion, in addition to learning loss and literacy rates.

To both narrow the focus of the report and increase its usefulness to Congress, the amendment instructs the Department of State to prioritize information about lockdowns in countries where READ Act programs have been implemented. I understand this is a so-called clean reauthorization and that the bill's sponsor probably doesn't want to amend it. I certainly get that.

However, I think these are unprecedented times, and if we are going to reauthorize it and not acknowledge what has just happened over the course of the last couple of years, I think we are missing one heck of an opportunity and being somewhat derelict in our responsibility.

I hope we can all see the importance of the issue, especially as we authorize or reauthorize the READ Act and its program for another 5 years. And with that, Mr. Chairman, I urge acceptance and yield the balance.

Chairman Meeks. The gentleman yields back the balance of his time.

I now recognize myself. I now recognize myself. I oppose this amendment. I oppose this amendment because the 2017 READ
Act already has annual reporting requirements to update the status of access to quality basic education around the world, and has already included the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic in previous reports.

The 5-year reauthorization of this Act would allow USAID to continue updating and assessing its strategy to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic's impact on access to quality basic education around the globe.

I yield back.

Any further debate on the amendment?

Ms. Bass. Yes, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman Meeks. Chairwoman Bass is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. Bass. Thank you. Mr. Chairman, I echo your opposition of this amendment as it would be duplicative of ongoing reporting and monitoring activities. The READ Act currently requires monitoring and evaluation of programs to determine whether activities carried out by USAID accomplish improvements in literacy or other basic skills.

Additionally, the current Act requires annual reporting that includes a description of the progress achieved over the last year toward meeting goals, with an emphasis on whether students have shown improvement. In 2018-2021 USAID education progress report, USAID directly addressed the COVID-19 pandemic and its
impact on global education. The report includes data that is country-specific and further states that USAID's response was in those countries.

Further, USAID reported that it held monthly calls for field-based education staff to address the new challenges the COVID-19 pandemic presented. The point of the strategy and its progress reports are to keep up to date with the circumstances that have both positive and negative impacts on learning outcomes and respond to those circumstances appropriately.

USAID has shown success through this by documenting COVID-19 responses in the education sector during the early stages of the pandemic. Five case studies reports were produced in Colombia, Georgia, Lebanon, Nigeria, and Zambia to document the return to learning process in the first 14 months of the pandemic.

USAID also developed and implemented a returning to learning during crisis toolkit that helps education planners prepare and decide on how to return to learning during and after educational disruptions, such as COVID-19.

I can imagine how difficult it is to speak to a screen, as my colleague mentioned, but I can also imagine how difficult it would be to be in an African country and have COVID and not have a hospital to go to.

Also, if there is a concern about taxpayers' money, I don't know why we would duplicate resources when the Act already calls
USAID has already begun consulting implementing partners and think tanks at the working and local levels to update the strategy, and they play to have a full rollout by September. This update will focus on equitable learning outcomes and joint reporting on global learning poverty due to the learning loss caused by COVID-19.

This legislation has received bipartisan and bicameral support, backing from USAID, which implements the strategy, as well as endorsements from 38 international education organizations. So I would just ask my colleagues to join me in support of this important measure and vote no on the amendment and yes on H.R. 7240.

Thank you.

Chairman Meeks. The gentlelady yields back.

Any further debate on the amendment? Hearing no further requests to speak, the question is on the amendment, Perry Number 747. We are going to take a vote by voice. All members please unmute your microphones.

All those in favor, say aye.

All those opposed, no.

In the opinion of the chair, the noes have it, and the amendment is not agreed to. And without objection, the motion to reconsider is laid upon the table.
We will now consider H.R. 4134, the Keeping Girls in School Act, with the Houlahan amendment in the nature of a substitute, Number 92.

Pursuant to notice, for purposes of markup, I now call up H.R. 4134, Keeping Girls in School Act. The clerk shall report the bill.

Ms. Hallman. H.R. 4134, to support empowerment, economic security, and educational opportunities for adolescent girls --

[The Bill H.R. 4134 follows:]

**********COMMITTEE INSERT**********
Chairman Meeks. Without objection, the first reading of the bill is dispensed with. And without objection, the bill shall be considered as read and open to amendment at any point.

Without objection, the Houla\-han amendment in the nature of a substitute, Number 92, previously circulated to members, shall be considered as read and will be treated as original text for purposes of the amendment.

[The Amendment offered by Ms. Houla\-han follows:]

**********COMMITTEE INSERT**********
Chairman Meeks. And at this time, I recognize myself to speak briefly on the measure.

I strongly support H.R. 4134, a bipartisan bill supporting education for adolescent girls around the world offered by Representative Frankel. This bill builds upon the fundamental pillar that equal access to quality basic education is a key tool for women and girls throughout the world, to embrace to both enhance economic growth and development as well as lower the risk for violence and instability.

This legislation authorizes USAID to form agreement to support adolescent girls access to quality secondary education, with a strong focus in countries where adolescent girls are significantly more likely to drop out of school than boys.

As we continue to contend with the broad-ranging and devastating impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, we must not forget the women and girls in historically marginalized and vulnerable communities around the world who have struggled to remain in school. Regardless of your gender, or where you live, every child deserves the opportunity to receive a quality education that would allow them to invest in themselves and in their communities.

I strongly support this bill. It is a very important bill. It is a bill that I think that people can follow. Just think of us in the United States of America. For years women did not have the opportunity to get the kind of education and to
participate in our society.

We have a much better society because of the education of women and their inclusion in our society. In those where they are denied that opportunity, you will see in many of those countries they don't have diplomatic or democratic institutions. We see where those countries are suffering because they are leaving some of the most brilliant minds on the sidelines.

It is very important to make sure that we are educating women and girls, and that every opportunity that we have to do that, and every time we get a chance to message that to anyone, that it is done. It is what will get and make this a better place for everyone to live.

So I hope everyone joins me unanimously in supporting this measure. Do any other members wish to speak on this measure?

Ms. Houlahan. Mr. Chairman, I seek recognition on the bill.

Chairman Meeks. Ms. Houlahan is recognized for five minutes.

Ms. Houlahan. Sorry. Apologies. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you for the very kind words about Representative Frankel's bill and my motion in the form of -- amendment in the form of a substitute.

For millennia, women and girls have been access to education, and even today they face barriers that prevent them from completing their education, even if they are fortunate enough to begin it.
Nearly 130 million girls worldwide are not enrolled in school.

The ongoing COVID-19 pandemic has worsened this crisis, and according to recent U.N. reporting, 11 million girls globally may not return to school because of COVID-related disruptions in their education.

Women make up more than two-thirds of the world's 796 million illiterate people. In Cambodia, 48 percent of rural women are illiterate compared to just 14 percent of rural men. And why?

According to global statistics, just 39 percent of rural girls attend secondary schools. This is far fewer than rural boys at 45, urban girls at 59, and urban boys at 60 percent.

While progress has been made in reducing the gender gap in urban primary school enrollment, data from 42 countries shows that rural girls are twice as likely as urban girls to be out of school. In Pakistan, a half-kilometer increase in the distance to school will decrease a girl's enrollment by 20 percent.

In Egypt, Indonesia, and several African countries, building local schools in rural communities increases girls' enrollments.

Especially in this committee, we talk a lot about the need to increase girls' access to education. But it is important to understand why this is so important and the astounding impact it can have on the broader community.

Data from 68 countries indicates that a woman's education
is a key factor in determining a child's survival. Vast improvements have been -- have seen the mortality rates of children decline in those less than 5 years old, since 1990, but rural rates are usually -- unusually much higher than urban ones.

Children of mothers with no education in Latin American and Caribbean region are 3.1 times more likely to die than those with mothers who have secondary or tertiary education, and 1.6 times more likely to die than those whose mothers have had a primary level of education.

Furthermore, rural women's deficits in education have long-term implications for poverty reduction. Every additional year of primary school increases a girl's eventual wages by 10 to 20 percent. It also encourages them to marry later and leaves them less vulnerable to violence.

These statistics are devastating, but can be dramatically improved if we simply put our minds to it. And that is why I am so proud to be an original co-sponsor of H.R. 4134, Keeping Girls in School Act, and in introducing this amendment in the form of a substitute on behalf of my friend, the lead sponsor of the bill, Representative Lois Frankel.

The Keeping Girls in School Act is critical and straightforward legislation that would ensure that every girl around the world would have access to education in order to realize her own ambitions and to play an important and vital and active
role in determining her own future.

Specifically, this bill would direct USAID to address the challenges that adolescent girls face in accessing quality secondary education in countries where girls are disproportionately more likely to drop out of schools than boys.

These challenges include the lack of safety at schools or traveling to school and online, including harassment or other forms of physical, sexual, or psychological violence; childhood and early and forced marriage; female genital mutilation; distance from secondary school; and inadequate sanitation facilities and products available at secondary schools. Lastly, early pregnancy and motherhood as well are addressed.

The bill also authorizes international development projects to improve safe and inclusive and quality education opportunities for girls by combating the challenges that girls face in successfully transitioning to and remaining enrolled in and completing secondary school.

And, finally, it requires an updated U.S. global strategy to empower adolescent girls that is informed by consultation with relevant U.S. Government and Congressional authorities, U.S. and international civil society, and the multilateral organizations that have expertise in women's empowerment and gender equality.

My amendment in the form of a substitute streamlines
reporting requirements and incorporates technical amendments, and I appreciate the input from agencies and the dozens of NGOs in support that make this bill even stronger.

The Keeping Girls in School Act has enjoyed strong support, not only in this committee but also in the House as a whole. It passed unanimously in the 116th Congress, with over 100 bipartisan co-sponsors. This version has 91 co-sponsors, again, with strong bipartisan support.

The United States is a global leader in these efforts, and every dollar that we spend in holistic programming to ensure girls compete will generate $2.80 in return.

I thank the chairman and Ranking Member McCaul for including the Keeping Girls in School Act in today's markup, and I encourage all of my colleagues to support the amendment in the form of a substitute and the underlying bill.

And with that, Mr. Chairman, I yield back.

Chairman Meeks. The gentlelady's time has expired.

Any other members wish to speak on this measure?

Mr. Deutch. Mr. Chairman? Mr. Chairman?

Chairman Meeks. Mr. Deutch is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. Deutch. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for the recognition.

Thank you to my friend, Representative Houlahan, for her very thoughtful and compelling presentation about a very important piece of legislation.
I want to thank my good friend, Representative Lois Frankel, from the district neighboring my own, for introducing H.R. 4134, the Keeping Girls in School Act, which helps to increase educational opportunities and economic security for girls worldwide, a bill I strongly support.

Representative Frankel has long been a champion of women's issues and gender equality, and this bill is yet another example of the impactful work that she does every day to improve the lives of girls and women in this country and around the world. This bill has broad bipartisan support. It easily passed the House in the last Congress, and I strongly urge all of my colleagues to support this fine piece of legislation again today.

I yield back.

Chairman Meeks. The gentleman yields back.

Anyone else wish to speak on this measure? Hearing no further requests to speak, let's move on amendments. For what purpose does Representative Perry from Pennsylvania seek recognition?

Mr. Perry. Mr. Chairman, I have got an amendment at the desk, and I believe it is Perry Number 1.

Chairman Meeks. The clerk shall distribute the amendment.

Has everyone received a copy of the amendment?

The clerk will please report the amendment.

Ms. Hallman. Perry Amendment Number 1 to the amendment in
the nature of a substitute to H.R. 41 --

[The Amendment offered by Mr. Perry follows:]

**********COMMITTEE INSERT**********
Chairman Meeks. Without objection, further reading of the amendment will be dispensed with.

The Representative from Pennsylvania, Mr. Perry, is now recognized for five minutes in support of his amendment.

Mr. Perry. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I don’t think anybody on this committee -- Republican, Democrat, liberal, conservative, anybody in between, including myself -- has any objection to the goals of this legislation. We all think it is laudable. As the father of two daughters, I think every parent across the globe wishes for the best for their children, whether they are sons or daughters, including me.

This amendment specifies that activities funded, approved by USAID, under this program must include measurable goals, benchmarks, and outcomes, beyond just currently the bill only requires rigorous monitoring and evaluation from program applicants. And I would just say that if that were the standard in the schools for our own children, we would not accept them -- we have not accepted them, and they are not in place now.

If it is good enough for us, it should be good enough for those around the world who receive our assistance, aid funding, and best wishes.

While the more maybe naive of us would probably like to think -- and we would like to think -- that program applicants would easily be able to provide these metrics, or perhaps already know
what rigorous monitoring and evaluation means, clearly I don't think we can rely only on that.

While I understand that international development organizations and USAID likely have some standard format or procedures for these type of programs, it seems to me if we are going to spend our taxpayer money on these programs, we should ensure that USAID knows exactly what kind of metrics they should require of applicants, even if they are less than the standard that we require in the United States of America.

But there should be some measurable goal or benchmark or outcome if we are going to spend money on this and ensure that indeed these young ladies around the world seeking the education and seeking the things that we are going to provide get that. And it is our job in my opinion, based on this legislation, to ensure that happens.

I hope this is an amendment that the majority will consider as reasonable, because I think it is, and I think it is hard to not support it. But with that, Mr. Chairman, I will yield the balance.

Chairman Meeks. The gentleman yields back.

I now recognize myself to speak on this amendment. And one of the things I do know is -- because Mr. Perry and I have had the opportunity to talk about his two daughters -- I have three daughters and two granddaughters, and I know how serious he is
and how loving he is of his family and his daughters and try to
make sure that they have everything that is needed, so they can
move forward. And I respect him for that -- for being a strong
father in that regard.

And while I don't view this amendment as necessary, I am
going to support this amendment, because I think it takes a step
to further clarify accountability in this particular section.
So I am not opposed to it. I will support this amendment, and
I yield back the balance of my time.

I now recognize Mr. McCaul for five minutes.

Mr. McCaul. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I also support this
amendment. I think it is responsible to have defined goals and
outcomes and accountability with any federal program that we have.
And I may have beat you all. I have got four daughters and
triplets and one son. But having said that, I support it.
I yield back.

Chairman Meeks. Who seeks recognition? Hearing no further
requests to speak, the question is on the amendment of Perry Number
1. We are going to take a vote by voice. All members please
unmute your microphones.

All those in favor, say aye.
All those opposed, no.

In the opinion of the chair, the ayes have it, and the
amendment is agreed to. And without objection, the motion to
The question now is on the Houlahan amendment in the nature of a substitute designated Number 92 to H.R. 4134. We are going to take a vote by voice. All members, again, unmute your microphones.

All those in favor, say aye.

All opposed, no.

In the opinion of the chair, the ayes have it. And without objection, the motion to reconsider is laid upon the table.

The question now is to report H.R. 4134, Keeping Girls in School Act, as amended, with a recommendation that the bill do pass, as amended. We are going to take a vote by voice. All members, again, unmute.

All those in favor, say aye.

All opposed, no.

In the opinion of the chair, the ayes have it. And without objection, the motion to reconsider is laid upon the table.

We are going to return now to H.R. 7240, which we did not voice vote when it first arose. The question is to report H.R. 7240 with a recommendation that the bill do pass. Again, we are going to do a vote by voice. Unmute microphones.

And all those in favor, say aye.

All opposed, no.

In the opinion of the chair, the ayes have it. And without
objection, the motion to reconsider is laid upon the table.

Pursuant to notice, for purposes of markup, I now call up H.R. 8463. The clerk will report the bill.

Ms. Hallman. H.R. 8463, to modify the requirements under the Millennium Challenge Act of 2003 for candidate countries --

[The Bill H.R. 8463 follows:]

**********COMMITTEE INSERT**********
Chairman Meeks. Without objection, the first reading of the bill is dispensed with. And without objection, the bill shall be considered as read and open to amendment at any point. And at this time, I recognize myself to speak briefly on this measure.

The Millennium Challenge Corporation has served as a cornerstone of U.S. foreign assistance for almost 20 years. However, since its founding in 2004, MCC has only been able to operate in 50 countries. Compact thresholds have restricted a lot of middle and low-middle income countries who are not wealthy countries but have GDPs that fluctuate constantly, often affected by tourism, natural disaster, and government instability.

This legislation will create more opportunities to establish MCC compacts with up to 125 countries around the world. We should support this bipartisan bill to expand MCC because if we are not engaged with middle and low-middle income countries, then our geopolitical rivals will have -- will be more than happy to fill this vacuum.

I yield back the balance of my time.

Do any other members wish to speak on this measure?

Mr. Castro. Mr. Chairman?

Chairman Meeks. Mr. Castro of Texas is recognized for five minutes.

Mr. Castro. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. My bipartisan
legislation, which I am glad to lead together with Representative Young Kim of California, makes a small but needed adjustment to the Millennium Challenge Corporation's pool of initial candidate countries.

Perhaps the most visible part of MCC's rigorous selection process is the scorecard, which evaluates more than 20 different policy indicators of good governance. Before countries are assessed on this scorecard, they must be classified as low income countries or lower middle income countries by the World Bank.

This focus on developing countries is essential and a core part of the MCC's mission and mandate. But the way we define these countries has led to several issues that this legislation seeks to address.

In the two decades of the MCC's existence, the number of eligible countries has shrunk by almost a third. MCC compacts, which need to be ratified by both the United States and the partner country, can take years to negotiate, ratify, and implement.

Under MCC's current structure, countries can suddenly become ineligible for assistance in the middle of a multi-year negotiation. Global disruptions, like a pandemic, or major conflict can lead to similar changes in a country's eligibility.

This legislation would defend the country pool as the 125 poorest countries using the World Bank's GNI per capita measurements. It will ensure that MCC has a stable number of
potential candidates, even as global incomes continue to change.

The new pool of potentially eligible countries would cover 98 percent of the world's poor and 90 percent of the countries MCC is -- MCC considers facing substantial vulnerability, including to pandemics, natural disasters, migration, and food insecurity.

The MCC Eligibility Expansion Act includes key safeguards to protect the MCC's development mandate and ensure that newly eligible countries did not crowd out support to low and lower middle income countries. This legislation includes language that would strengthen statutory direction to the MCC's Board to prioritize development, need, and impact.

It would also require all potential candidate countries to identify appropriate national contributions during compact negotiations, meaning wealthier countries would pitch in more.

Lastly, in implementing this legislation, I expect the MCC to compare this small pool of newly eligible, upper middle income countries against their peers in determine eligibility through the scorecard. This bill would provide the MCC with more certainty and stability when it chooses to pursue a compact. It makes no changes to the scorecards or to the other necessary criteria that countries need to meet, including criteria on democracy and the rule of law.
While this legislation would expand the number of countries that could be considered by almost 45, only a few would meet these additional criteria and ultimately be eligible for assistance. And that is by design.

When Congress established the MCC, we intended it to be a highly selective agency which would reduce global poverty through partnership with the best governing -- best governed developing countries, and MCC has consistently enjoyed bipartisan support and international credibility because it has kept unerring focus on that mission.

With your support today, we can ensure that the MCC will continue its important work and have a greater impact. I urge my colleagues to support this legislation and oppose any amendments that would politicize the agency or undermine its development mandate.

With that, I yield back, Chairman.

Chairman Meeks. The gentleman yields back.

I now recognize Representative Malliotakis from the State of New York for five minutes.

Ms. Malliotakis. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to voice my support for H.R. 8463, the Millennium Challenge Corporation Eligibility Expansion Act. The Millennium Challenge Corporation has enjoyed broad bipartisan support since its founding under President Bush. This support stems from the
agency's strong track record of success in its mission of eliminating poverty through economic growth.

The agency is extremely selective, choosing to partner only with countries that pass its strict eligibility criteria that include high standards for democracy, economic freedom, and respect for human rights. Across the globe, we are seeing new and dire challenges, including natural disasters, rising migration, and food insecurity being faced by countries who are on the path towards development.

We must ensure that these countries are capable of their own sustainability and viability, but we must also be able to guide them and assist to the best of our abilities. The target poverty, the Millennium -- I am sorry. To target poverty, the Millennium Challenge Corporation only selects countries that fall below a certain income threshold.

Since its founding, the number of countries eligible for partnerships, based only on financial standards, has dwindled to close to 80. The MCC Eligibility Expansion Act would expand the MCC's candidate pool to the world's 125 poorest countries as classified by the World Bank. This would allow the agency more flexibility to effectively address poverty wherever it exists.

It would also add stability to MCC's projects, since it would remove the risk that countries could change income categories
during compact development.

For these reasons, I urge my colleagues to strongly support this measure, and I am very proud to join Chairman Castro in co-sponsoring it.

Thank you, and I yield back.

Chairman Meeks. The gentlelady yields back.

Anyone else seek recognition? Hearing no further requests, let's move on to amendments. For what purpose does the Representative from Pennsylvania, Mr. Perry, seek recognition?

Mr. Perry. Mr. Chairman, I have got an amendment at the desk. It appears to be Number 756.

Chairman Meeks. The clerk shall distribute the amendment.

Mr. Castro. Chairman, I reserve a point of order.

Chairman Meeks. Point of order is reserved.

Has everyone received a copy of the amendment? The clerk will please report the amendment.

Ms. Hallman. Perry Amendment Number 756 to H.R. 8463, at the end --

[The Amendment offered by Mr. Perry follows:]

**********COMMITTEE INSERT**********
Chairman Meeks. Without objection, further reading of the amendment will be dispensed with.

The Representative from Pennsylvania, Mr. Perry, is now recognized for five minutes in support of his amendment.

Mr. Perry. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. This is a non-controversial amendment that simply adds a report no later than 100 days after -- 180 days after enactment of this Act from the CEO of the Millennium Challenge Corporation detailing all known and suspected instances of corporations, projects, impacted by Chinese Communist Party, CCP, malign influence, and any strategy by the corporation to address instances of CCP malign influence.

Just this morning, the Asia Pacific Subcommittee held a hearing on gray zone coercion in the Indo-Pacific. As we all know, China has no shortage of tools in their toolbox from the aggression in the South China Sea to Confucius Institute's wielding influences at colleges around the world.

This amendment will help inform Congress as we oversee -- as we oversee the Millennium Challenge Corporation, and, more importantly, continue to fight back against the CCP's malign influence around the world and specifically where the Millennium Challenge Corporation is working.

With that, I urge adoption and yield the balance.

Chairman Meeks. The gentleman yields the balance of his
Mr. Castro. I seek recognition, Chairman.

Chairman Meeks. The gentleman is recognized.

Mr. Castro. This legislation is about expanding the pot of countries eligible for MCC partnership. So it has nothing to do with China or the CCP. As such, the amendment introduces a new subject matter untethered from the rest of the bill, and the amendment should not be considered in order.

I yield back.

Chairman Meeks. The chair is prepared to rule. The amendment is not -- is not germane. The legislation is about changing eligibility rules for the Millennium Challenge Corporation. It is not about China, the CCP, or malign influence. Important topics they are, but the topic at hand they are not. Because the amendment introduces a new subject not at issue in this legislation, the amendment is not germane.

Are there any other amendments?

Mr. Perry. Mr. Chairman, I have got an amendment at the desk, Number 757.

Chairman Meeks. The clerk shall distribute the amendment.

Mr. Castro. Chairman, I reserve a point of order.

Chairman Meeks. Point of order is reserved.

Clerk, please report the amendment.
Ms. Hallman. Perry Amendment Number 757 to H.R. 8463, add at the end the following --

[The Amendment offered by Mr. Perry follows:]

**********COMMITTEE INSERT**********
Chairman Meeks. Without objection, further reading of the amendment will be dispensed with.

The Representative from Pennsylvania is now recognized for five minutes in support of his amendment.

Mr. Perry. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Unfortunately, it has become a pattern of the far left that they attempt to insert unrelated climate objectives into every facet of domestic and international policy. The Millennium Challenge Corporation was created to fund projects that help lift countries out of poverty, not advance so-called clean energy and sustainable so-called goals that we seek globally to push from their beachfront properties.

Let's be honest here. Solar power and electric vehicles aren't really clean and sustainable goals. They are really just socialism with new branding. Just look at the solar industry. It is highly reliant on polysilicon source from China, especially from East Turkestan, which is home to four of the five largest polysilicon factories in the world.

Congress has repeatedly acknowledged the atrocities perpetrated against the Uyghur population. But in legislation like this, we can't seem to do anything about it. We are unwilling to do anything about it.

This amendment is just another way for Congress to assert the taxpayers' money should not diverted for unintended purposes, specifically for these projects that don't meet the mark.
I urge adoption and yield the balance.

Chairman Meeks. The gentleman yields back the balance of his time.

Mr. Castro. Mr. Chair, I would like to be recognized.

Chairman Meeks. For what purpose does the gentleman wish to be recognized?

Mr. Castro. I will argue against the amendment. The Perry amendment includes funding prohibitions on carrying out an executive order that has mandates far beyond this committee's jurisdiction, including for the Secretary of Interior, the Secretary of Defense, and the Secretary of Commerce. And the amendment is a violation of Rule 10 of the House of Representatives.

I yield back.

Chairman Meeks. Is the gentleman addressing his point of order?

Mr. Castro. Yes.

Chairman Meeks. The chair is prepared to rule. This amendment references an executive order, which includes many directives far outside the committee's jurisdiction. As such, it is a violation of Rule 10 of the House of Representatives. The point of order is sustained, and the amendment fails.

Are there any other amendments? The question is to report 8463 with a recommendation that the bill do pass. We are going
to take a vote by voice. All members unmute your microphones.

All those in favor, say aye.

All opposed, no.

In the opinion of the chair, the ayes have it. And without objection, the motion to reconsider is laid upon the table.

Mr. Perry. Mr. Chairman, I request a recorded vote.

Chairman Meeks. A recorded vote is ordered. The question is to report H.R. -- and we will roll the vote until tomorrow. We will -- as indicated to other members, we will then take all recorded votes.

We will now consider H.R. 6455, the Prosper Africa Act, with the McCaul amendment in the nature of a substitute, Number 69. Pursuant to notice, for purposes of markup, I now call up H.R. 6455, the Prosper Africa Act.

The clerk will report the bill.

Ms. Hallman. H.R. 6455, to promote, facilitate, and increase two-way trade and investment between the United States and --

[The Bill H.R. 6455 follows:]

**********COMMITTEE INSERT**********
Chairman Meeks. Without objection, the first reading of the bill is dispensed with, and the bill shall be considered as read and open to amendment at any point.

And without objection, the McCaul amendment in the nature of a substitute designated Number 69, circulated to members, shall be considered as read and will be treated as original text for purposes of amendment.

[The Amendment offered by Mr. McCaul follows:]

**********COMMITTEE INSERT**********
Chairman Meeks. I recognize myself to speak briefly on this measure.

For the United States to remain a trusted and preferred partner in Africa, U.S. policy toward Africa must include a comprehensive vision to increase and sustain economic engagement and investment throughout the continent.

Since Prosper Africa was established in 2019, the United States has renewed its focus on providing U.S. businesses the tools needed to navigate diverse African markets. It is clear the United States must, as a national security imperative, complete strategically -- compete strategically in a region that offers so much opportunity for our private sector, both at home and abroad.

What the U.S.-Africa Economic Engagement Act will do is codify Prosper Africa and help the Administration capitalize on efforts underway by the state, USAID, and other departments and agencies to deepen economic ties with African partners.

This bill will require the Administration to develop a strategy, submit comprehensive reports to Congress for 7 years, and establish a leadership committee and advisory council that will provide important strategic guidance to make Prosper Africa successful.

I am honored and proud to be a co-sponsor of this important piece of legislation, which was introduced -- and I thank him
for his understanding to connect and being involved, and that 
the United States has to step up on the continent of Africa, by 
my friend and colleague Ranking Member McCaul, as well as Mr. 
Smith and Chairwoman Bass, and I know both chair and ranking member 
of that committee is focused on this continent, and I would hope 
that all of us can join hands in support of this bill.

And with that, I now recognize -- I yield back the balance 
of my time, and I recognize Ranking Member Michael McCaul for 
five minutes.

Mr. McCaul. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And I think we all 
recognize the significance of Africa. It is the fastest-growing 
population of any continent, and we all recognize the presence 
of China in the region through the Belt and Road Initiative, as 
demonstrated by 20 African nations abstaining from the U.N. 
Security Council.

With respect to Russian aggression in Ukraine, that 
demonstrates alone that the grip that China has over 20 of those 
countries, I have often by told ambassadors from Africa, you know, 
why are you dealing with the Chinese? Why are you working with 
them? And why are you letting yourself into a debt trap?

And the answer, quite frankly and sadly, is because you are 
not there. And you know how important the continent is. You 
have been there many times, as have I. We have got to compete 
and be on the field if we are going to beat China at its game,
and if we can help the African people liberate themselves from, you know, the tyranny of Communist China and be more advanced in the values of the United States of America.

So I want to thank you for your support on this, and I look forward to taking a trip over there with you, and hopefully many members of the committee, soon. And I look forward to its passage.

I yield back.

Chairman Meeks. Any further requests to speak? Hearing no further requests, let's move on to amendments.

Representative Perry?

Mr. Perry. Mr. Chairman, I have got an amendment at the desk, Number 758.

Chairman Meeks. The clerk shall distribute the amendment.

Mr. Castro. I reserve of order, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman Meeks. A point of order is reserved.

Has everyone received a copy of the amendment? The clerk will please report the amendment.

Ms. Hallman. Perry Amendment Number 758 to the amendment in the nature of a substitute to H.R. 6455 --

[The Amendment offered by Mr. Perry follows:]

**********COMMITTEE INSERT**********
Chairman Meeks. Without objection, further reading of the amendment will be dispensed with.

I now recognize the gentleman from Pennsylvania for 5 minutes to speak on his amendment.

Mr. Perry. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. This amendment highlights the impact of regressive social policies of far left environmentalists on developing nations for the uninitiated.

Many African nations are unable to provide electricity to most of their citizens, in part because Western institutions and states typically tie development assistance to the use of inefficient alternative energy resources, the inputs of which are largely sourced from China or which are otherwise included in Chinese supply chains.

Here is a case in point. The United Nations Development Programme, the UNDP, which has done a lot of work in Africa, has a whole feature article on their web page entitled "Breaking Up With Fossil Fuels" arguing that it is time for governments and markets to design their leaving strategies. The COVID-19 pandemic has opened the door for policymakers to act now to prevent the catastrophic and unequal consequences of climate change. Phasing out fossil fuels and taxing carbon will spur growth and innovation.

Easy for them to say. Of course, the UNDP might as well be serving as a promoter of the genocidal CCP's bottom line.
This amendment ensures that any assistance from international financial institutions, or IFIs, cannot be designated for any renewable energy project that utilizes Chinese supply chains. That is it. It should be a no-brainer. No one on this committee should be on the side of supporting Chinese slave labor.

This amendment, in observance of the left's ridiculous war on affordable energy, also instructs our executive directors at each IFI to oppose any ban against funding fossil fuel projects. Might be other projects. Maybe the fossil fuel one makes it; maybe it doesn't. But it shouldn't be an outright ban on them just because they exist.

So long as Western countries and organizations focus on imposing a net zero vision on countries struggling to obtain even intermittent access to electricity, they will never enable these countries to confront ongoing and future national challenges in a manner that serves their -- their national priorities.

To be clear, it is immoral to export these regressive policies to low-income countries who should be free to develop their natural resources and give their citizens access to an electric grid and a better life. And these countries also shouldn't be condemned to use inefficient and costly renewable energy resources sourced with slave labor that they oppose.

Numerous African nations, including Angola and Nigeria, are
the world leaders in oil production and have enormous -- are world leaders in oil production and have enormous amounts of coal deposits in their very own country.

However, the West continues to maintain with zero shame for their hypocrisy an imposition of double standards, that those countries should be able to develop as Western nations were able to do. We just ensure that they are going to remain in poverty, so we can feel good about it.

In the meantime, millions of people in low-income countries have to resort to very basic means, including burning firewood to stay warm. The March 2021 UNDP article even conceded that despite the U.N.'s awe-inspiring work in furnishing solar cookers, which are made with the help of CCP slave labor, demand for firewood in areas like east Sudan is still very high, as it is more reliable, as it is a more reliable energy source than what the UNDP are providing for the local refugee and Sudanese population.

What is critically important to remember here is that there is no one-size-fits-all approach to every nation, which should come down from Western nations imposing their will on them. That may offend the paternalistic and colonialist sensibilities of some of my colleagues on the other side of the aisle, but it is true.

Let nations develop according to what is best for their citizens, by their governments, and by them, for total rejection
of imperialist green energy mind-set shared by the far left neo-Marxist climate advocates.

I urge adoption of this amendment, and I yield the balance.

Chairman Meeks. The gentleman yields the balance.

Mr. Castro. Chairman, I would like to speak on my point of order.

Chairman Meeks. The gentleman is recognized.

Mr. Castro. This amendment is outside the scope of the jurisdiction of the Committee on Foreign Affairs because international financial institutions are under the jurisdiction of the Committee on Financial Services. While I share Mr. Perry's wish that international financial institutions be under our committee's jurisdiction, unfortunately, they remain firmly within the jurisdiction of financial services.

Given Rule 10 of the House, we cannot consider this amendment.

Chairman Meeks. The chair is prepared to rule. The gentleman is correct. This amendment directs the Secretary of Treasury to take action pertaining to international financial institutions and is, therefore, squarely within the jurisdiction of the Financial Services Committee.

We now consider -- we cannot consider this amendment under Rule 10 of the House of Representatives.

We are now going to take a vote by voice on the McCaul amendment in the nature of a substitute, designated Number 69 to
H.R. 6455, the Prosper Africa Act.

The question now is on McCaul amendment in the nature of a substitute designated Number 69, and we are going to take a vote by voice. All members unmute your microphones.

All those in favor, say aye.

All opposed, no.

In the opinion of the chair, the ayes have it. Without objection, the motion to reconsider is laid upon the table. The amendment in the nature of a substitute is adopted.

The question is to report H.R. 6455, Prosper Africa Act, as amended, with a recommendation that the bill do pass, as amended. Again, we are going to take a voice vote. All members unmute your microphones.

All those in favor, say aye.

All opposed, no.

In the opinion of the chair, the ayes have it. And without objection, the motion to reconsider is laid upon the table, and the measure is ordered favorably reported, as amended.

We are going to vote -- at this particular time, the committee will go into recess, and we will resume tomorrow morning at 9:00 a.m. for all recorded votes.

This markup is now in recess.

[Whereupon, at 5:23 p.m., the committee recessed, to reconvene at 9:00 a.m., Friday, July 29, 2022.]