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## SUPPORT THE UNITED STATES INTERNATIONAL COMMUNICATIONS REFORM ACT OF 2014 – H.R. 4490

*“Broadcasting Board of Governors is practically defunct in terms of its capacity to be able to tell a message around the world.”* - Secretary of State Hilary Clinton, January 23, 2013, Testimony to the House Committee on Foreign Affairs

*“I, along with some of my board colleagues, have consistently advocated for necessary and far-reaching reform of the governance structure and organization of U. S. international broadcasting (USIB). My belief in the importance and need for these reforms has only grown stronger the longer I have served.”* – Dennis Mulhaupt, April 9, 2013, Resignation letter from the BBG Board

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**The Problem:** The Broadcasting Board of Governors (“BBG”) is a chronically troubled government agency. In January 2013, the Government Accountability Office (“GAO”) and the State Department’s Office of Inspector General (“OIG”) both issued reports which outlined structural, functional and cultural deficiencies that have severely reduced the BBG’s effectiveness. The BBG is entirely federally funded with an annual appropriation level of approximately \$750 million.

### What this bill does:

► **Fixes Well-documented Management Problems.** Currently, five U.S. international broadcasting entities report to the Broadcasting Board of Governors (“BBG”), a group of 9 part-time individuals, who meet once a month to make management decisions. Important decisions can languish if the Board does not have a quorum which is often the case. This legislation would establish a full-time, day-to-day agency head and reduce the role of the Board to a more appropriate advisory capacity. These changes have been recommended by the Office of the Inspector General and are widely recognized as needed reforms.

► **Clarifies the Mission of the Voice of America.** The charter states that VOA will provide a “clear and effective presentation of the policies of the United States.” Over time, VOA has abandoned this mission and adopted a mission of the so-called “surrogates” to provide uncensored local news and information to people in closed societies. This legislation makes clear that the Voice of America mission is to support U.S. public diplomacy efforts.

► **Consolidates “the Freedom Broadcasters.”** Radio Free Europe-Radio Liberty (RFE/RL), Radio Free Asia (RFA), and the Middle East Broadcasting Network (MBN) have the same mission – to provide uncensored local news and information to people in closed societies – with different geographic reach. Consolidating these organizations into a single, non-federal organization will achieve cost savings, allow for closer collaboration, and improve responsiveness. While the consolidation would mean shared administrative staff and other economies of scale, they would retain their distinct “brand names.”

In addition:

- Mandates important workforce restructuring measures, such as ending the misuse of personnel contracts and capping the number of senior management positions. Mandates cost-saving consolidations and makes future funding contingent upon implementation of reforms. ***Includes at least \$160M in cost-savings below current baseline projections according to CBO;***
- Increase public-private partnerships to leverage available broadcasting infrastructure and reduce overall costs to the American taxpayer;
- Increases contract competition, oversight, and evaluation – all areas the Inspector General has cited the Agency for violations;
- A requirement to review and justify all positions within the organization and how those positions align with the refined organizational mission; and
- Improve coordination between the Department of State and the U.S. international broadcasting entities to reduce redundancy, increase collaboration, and align resources with our national security objectives.