

March 1, 2021

The Honorable Barbara Lee, Chairwoman  
House Appropriations Subcommittee on State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs

The Honorable Hal Rogers, Ranking Member  
House Appropriations Subcommittee on State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs

The Honorable Chris Coons, Chairman  
Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs

The Honorable Lindsey Graham, Ranking Member  
Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs

Dear Chairwoman Lee and Chairman Coons, and Ranking Members Rogers and Graham:

On behalf of the undersigned organizations, we are writing to urge you to fund important programs that support gender equality in the FY2022 State, Foreign Operations and Related Programs Appropriations bill and to include related Committee report language to further assist in these efforts. U.S. leadership in advancing gender equality furthermore requires maintaining the International Affairs Budget (function 150) at no less than the current enacted level. Proposed investments in gender equality should not come at the expense of poverty-focused development, global health, and humanitarian assistance.

Women and girls are chronically undervalued members of society who face abuses and violations of their human rights in staggeringly high numbers, but who deserve the same economic, social and political opportunities as others in their communities. Promoting gender equality is a matter of justice and equity, but U.S. investments in women's and girls' rights and leadership also advance American interests in security, development, and growth. A conclusive body of research and experience has shown that when women and girls are meaningfully included in all aspects of decision-making, countries are more likely to be peaceful and prosper economically. As such – even as we face tremendous fiscal challenges – American investments to advance the political, economic, and social status of women and girls should be an essential component of U.S. Government efforts to promote global stability and strengthen our national security.

We strongly believe that American investments in programs that support the rights, agency, and health of women and girls are critical to ensuring U.S. global leadership, economic growth around

the world, peaceful transitions of power, development and prosperity, countering violent extremism, and more. Investing and promoting the empowerment, health and human rights of women and girls supports our broader development goals, including women's increased access to education, employment, and entrepreneurial opportunities, as well as creating a healthier, more sustainable environment. In short, robust funding for gender programming that is strategic, coordinated, and easy to track, monitor, and evaluate will increase the effectiveness of U.S. assistance dollars throughout the U.S. foreign assistance portfolio.

The COVID-19 pandemic touched the lives of all irrespective of gender, race, ethnicity, and economic standing. However it also served as a canary in a mineshaft, alerting governments and communities to how a humanitarian crisis impacts more severely those in already weakened and disenfranchised positions. The U.S. Government in 2021 will face many pressing priorities as it seeks to undo the harm of governmental neglect of initiatives related to gender equality and address the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, but it also has the opportunity not just to re-establish U.S. commitments to elevate the status of women but to offer a bold, progressive vision for removing obstacles to equality globally.

As you begin to draft the FY 2022 State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs Appropriations bill, we ask that you consider funding and report language for the following programs important to promoting gender equality:

- 1. GENDER EQUALITY** - We request robust funding to promote gender equality in United States Government diplomatic, development and humanitarian efforts by raising the status, increasing the participation, economic empowerment, and ensuring the safety, health, and rights of women and girls worldwide. This should be combined with a commitment to scale up funding so that all State and Foreign Operations funding is shaped by a gender analysis, and programs and strategies across sectors target gender equality.

Proposed Report Language

***Section 7059. Gender Equality (New)***

*Funds appropriated by this Act shall be made available to promote gender equality. This shall include gender mainstreaming across all sectors and areas of work. This shall include ensuring all programs, activities, and strategies are shaped by a gender analysis. This shall also include programs to promote women's political leadership, advance women's economic empowerment, as well as to implement multiyear strategies to prevent and respond to gender-based violence, empower adolescent girls, advance protection and care for children in adversity, and support the execution and monitoring of a national action plan on Women, Peace and Security.*

***Reports (New)***

*Not later than 90 days after the enactment of this act, the Secretary of State, in coordination with the USAID Administrator, CEO of the MCC, and CEO of the DFC shall submit a report to the Committees on Appropriations assessing the progress made by the United States on shaping their strategies, programs, and activities with a gender analysis*

*across all sectors and all components of their portfolios, including numbers of full time equivalent staff responsible for working on gender, and percentage of their portfolios, by funding amount, that has been shaped by a gender analysis, and the percentage of the respective portfolios that target gender equality efforts.*

***Title II United States Agency for International Development Operating Expenses (New)***

Gender Equality. -- Of the funds made available for USAID operating expenses in Title II of this Act, at least \$15,000,000 shall be made available for additional training, technical assistance, and staff with gender expertise and gender training for the primary purpose of ensuring that USAID has the technical capacity to implement Sec. 3 of the Women's Entrepreneurship and Economic Empowerment Act of 2018 (Public Law 115-428) appropriately across the entire agency.

***Millennium Challenge Corporation (New)***

Of the funds made available for MCC administrative expenses in this Act, at least \$2,000,000 shall be made available for additional training, technical assistance, and staff with gender expertise and training to ensure that the MCC has the capacity to shape all compacts with a gender analysis.

**Justification:** Gender inequality is a problem that spans sectors, nations, and communities and is a key driver of poverty and other forms of injustice around the world. It is a major obstacle to the realization of human rights, social and economic growth, and human development. For example, if women had equal access to agricultural resources, the number of hungry people in the world could be reduced by [100 to 150 million](#). When women are an integral part of peace processes, peace agreements are [35 percent more](#) likely to last over 15 years, and if women around the world had the same opportunities as men, the [world's economy would grow by 28 trillion dollars](#). However, according to the World Economic Forum Gender Gap Report, it will take over 100 more years to close the gap between men and women, which would be required to see the above positive gains.

To address this important and cross-cutting issue, foreign assistance programs must integrate efforts to achieve gender equality, requiring robust funding. The United States should demonstrate its commitment to building on past efforts to advance gender equality as a cornerstone of foreign policy by appropriating at least \$2.1 billion to effectively integrate gender across foreign assistance -- \$2.1 billion represents the inflation-adjusted peak funding requested by the President in 2014. While this amount would still put the US gender equality funding behind that of other nations, it would be the largest amount in an appropriation bill and represent an important step towards ensuring that the US's foreign policy holistically and systematically includes gender. This would also help to encourage USAID to more robustly implement the Women's Entrepreneurship and Economic Empowerment Act (P.L. 115-428) that mandates the agency to ensure that all programs and activities be shaped by a gender analysis and that gender equality and women's empowerment be included throughout the program cycle.. However the need to address gender equality is not exclusive to USAID; a bold commitment of \$2.1 billion for gender

integration would signal to other agencies the necessity of addressing gender across their foreign policy tools to make the world more equitable in its reach and benefits, and inclusive of women and girls.

The reporting language would help to identify a baseline of where agencies are and what steps they have already undertaken to address integrating gender into their efforts for effective development and diplomacy. This would help to then target specific areas where improvements could be made or specific support is needed to ensure that U.S. taxpayer funds are being used effectively.

The increases in administrative and operating expenses are to ensure that there is **dedicated** funding for training for all staff across programs, sectors, offices, and functional staff (like contracting officers and procurement teams) and also for increased staff with gender expertise, because every issue area across every function needs to have staff that can adequately identify how gender could play a role in impacting the program, activity, or strategy to ensure that funds are used effectively.

**2. GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE (GBV)** – We request the establishment of a GBV Global Fund of no less than \$380 million to support efforts to prevent and respond to gender-based violence worldwide. This GBV Global Fund should build upon existing investments, including implementation of the interagency U.S. Strategy to Prevent and Respond to GBV Globally (\$250 million); launch of a new interagency Presidential Task Force on GBV Globally (\$70 million); activities to end child, early, and forced marriage (\$30 million); and contributions to the [UNICEF-UNFPA Joint Program](#) on Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting (FGM/C) (\$5 million). In addition, given the dramatic increase of GBV as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, we request no less than \$25 million to support the global response to the rise in violence against women and girls during the pandemic. Across these activities should be a commitment to dedicate funding to programs addressing GBV in humanitarian crises.

- **GBV/COVID (new)** – We request that no less than \$25 million be dedicated to support the global response to the rise in violence against women and girls during the pandemic. [UNFPA estimates](#) that for every three months the lockdown continues, an additional 15 million reports of GBV can be expected. The UN Trust Fund to End Violence Against Women’s (UNTF EVAW) [initial assessment](#) (May 2020) and [second assessment](#) six months into the crisis, showed that the continued economic insecurity and movement restrictions are still driving increased violence against women and girls. This study highlights the urgent need to resource support services for survivors of violence provided by CSOs and women’s rights organizations (WROs) that are on the front line of community responses. These funds should include a commitment to support the UNTF EVAW work as it is the only global grant-making mechanism that is dedicated exclusively to addressing all forms of violence against women and girls. The Fund is managed by UN Women on behalf of the UN System.
- **GBV Presidential Task Force (new)** -- We request no less than \$70 million to establish an interagency Presidential Task Force for GBV Globally (PTF). The purpose of this PTF will be to support the review and update of the U.S. Strategy to Prevent and Respond to

GBV Globally, which was most recently updated in 2016, and coordinate the development and execution of new agency-level action plans to implement the revised strategy. The \$70 million requested should support this work, offering additional resources for operating expenses to build the internal structures and capacity of USG agencies to effectively address GBV – including increased training, hiring of additional personnel with GBV expertise to provide technical assistance, and stronger accountability through improved monitoring/evaluation/learning and reporting functions.

- **Child, Early, Forced Marriage (increase)** - We request no less than \$30 million be dedicated to the implementation of a coordinated and comprehensive effort to end child marriage and meet the needs of married girls globally in alignment with the United States Strategy to Empower Adolescent Girls. This represents an **INCREASE** from the \$15 million enacted in FY21. This number is based on a 2012 CBO score, estimating the cost to implement the International Protecting Girls by Preventing Child Marriage Act, and on increased need due to COVID-19. These funds should include a new commitment to the U.S. commitment to the joint UNICEF/UNFPA Global Program to End Child Marriage, which has generated remarkable results addressing child marriage in 12 of the most high-prevalence or high-burden countries.

**Justification:** Gender-based violence (GBV) broadly, and violence against women and girls (VAWG) specifically, is a horrific and widespread human rights abuse that requires a robust response. GBV and VAWG occurs in many forms, including intimate partner violence; child, early, and forced marriage; rape; sexual assault; trafficking; female genital mutilation/cutting; and so-called “honor” killings. These violations occur both in times of peace and during humanitarian crises. Such violence is also an early warning sign of instability and violent conflict. GBV is a critical impediment to the personal safety, economic empowerment, and long-term well-being of people around the world, particularly women and girls who often bear the brunt of such violence. This issue also has grave impacts on the peace, prosperity, and security of communities and nations. In 2016, the [global cost of violence against women](#) was estimated by the UN to be \$1.5 trillion, equivalent to approximately 2% of the global gross domestic product (GDP), or roughly the size of the entire Canadian economy.

Around the world, 1 in 5 girls will be married before their 18<sup>th</sup> birthdays. These numbers are even higher in times of conflict and humanitarian crisis. In fact, 9 out of 10 countries with the highest child marriage rates are fragile or extremely fragile states. Child brides are deprived of their fundamental rights to health, education and safety and commonly face risks from early pregnancy, childbirth, and intimate partner violence, all of which often perpetuate a cycle of poverty. Communities and nations also feel the impact of child marriage. Systems that undervalue the contribution of girls and young women limit their own possibilities for growth, stability, and transformation. In the past decade, child marriage has decreased by 15 percent, but no region is on track to meet the SDG target of eliminating this harmful practice by 2030.

In humanitarian emergencies, women and girls face an increased risk of GBV – 1 in 5 women report experiencing sexual violence in crises, with many more facing domestic violence ([sometimes up to 65%](#) of women in certain contexts), child marriage, and human trafficking

during displacement. Despite the critical need to address this issue, GBV funding accounted for just [0.12 per cent](#) of all humanitarian funding – which represents only one-third of funding requested for GBV.

The COVID-19 pandemic has further exacerbated already high rates of gender-based violence globally. UNFPA estimates an additional 30 million cases of GBV and 13 million child marriages will occur between 2020 and 2030.

Proposed Report Language:

- *The Committee recommends funding at not less than \$30 million for programs that reduce the incidence of child and forced marriage and to meet the needs of already married adolescent girls. The Committee encourages the continued implementation of policies and programs that empower adolescent girls through diplomatic and development efforts, as well as coordination of all relevant U.S. government agencies, including but not limited to the U.S. Department of State, USAID, Peace Corps and the Millennium Challenge Corporation, to ensure the empowerment of adolescent girls worldwide, as a critical component to combat child marriage.*
- *The Committee notes that the 2015 U.S. Department of State and USAID Evaluation of Implementation of the United States Strategy to Prevent and Respond to Gender-Based Violence Globally highlights a series of recommendations essential for continued and successful implementation of this Strategy. Among them is expansion of GBV-related programming, including through stand-alone and multi-sector programs, enhancement of public awareness of all forms of GBV, and expansion of externally-facing tools and resources related to GBV. The Committee recommends the Department of State and USAID conduct activities to implement the Strategy and fulfill recommendations noted in the 2015 report and further evaluations since that time.*
- *Gender Based Violence in Emergency Contexts – The Committee remains concerned at the extremely high rates of gender-based violence resulting from humanitarian crises. The Committee recommends an increase in additional resources to advance a multiyear strategy to prevent and respond to gender-based violence and specific programming to address GBV in emergency settings. The Committee acknowledges that Safe from the Start programming is critical to countering gender-based violence, particularly in humanitarian emergency settings. The Committee directs the Secretary of State, in coordination with the USAID Administrator, not later than 180 days after enactment of this Act, to submit a report assessing the progress made by the United States and by partners in implementation or delivery of humanitarian assistance to prevent, mitigate, and address the incidence of gender-based violence in humanitarian emergencies. The report should include an aggregation and examination of data and research regarding the key drivers of gender-based violence in humanitarian emergencies and gaps in response mechanisms, the critical needs of and services required by survivors or those at risk, successful program models to address, prevent, and mitigate such violence, and data on outcomes and impacts of programs supported by Safe from the Start.*

**3. WOMEN'S ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT** – We request no less than \$350,000,000 for all activities that foster women's economic empowerment. This request includes funding for programs administered by USAID, the State Department, and other relevant agencies to comprehensively advance women's economic empowerment and equality, including overcoming social, legal, and regulatory barriers to WEEE (\$200 million), previous U.S. Government contributions to the We-Fi Initiative (\$50 million), and implementation of the Women's Entrepreneurship and Economic Empowerment Act of 2018 (\$100 million).

Proposed Bill Language

GENDER EQUALITY (edited in red)

SEC. 7059. (a) WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT.— (2) WOMEN'S ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT.— **Of the funds appropriated by this Act a minimum of \$100,000,000 shall be made** available to implement the Women's Entrepreneurship and Economic Empowerment Act of 2018 (Public Law 115– 428): Provided, That the Secretary of State and the Administrator of the United States Agency for International Development, as appropriate, shall consult with the Committees on Appropriations on the implementation of such Act. (3) WOMEN'S ~~GLOBAL DEVELOPMENT AND PROSPERITY~~ **ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT and EQUALITY** FUND.—Of the funds appropriated under title III of this Act, up to \$200,000,000 shall be made available for a Women's Economic Empowerment and Equality~~Global Development and Prosperity~~ Fund. **Provided further that an additional \$50,000,000 shall be made available for the U.S. Government contribution to the Women Entrepreneurs Finance Initiative.**

**Justification**

Investment in programs that strengthen women's access to quality economic resources and employment opportunities, support women's entrepreneurship and financial inclusion, and break down barriers to women's participation in the economy creates far-reaching benefits. However, women still own and control fewer assets, including property and land; earn less and experience more economic insecurity, and exercise more limited decision making power over economic and other decisions than men, impeding their economic advancement. They also face unique barriers such as gender-based violence, disproportionate unpaid care burden, and unmet health needs that stand in the way of their progress. Programs focused on addressing the full range of factors that hold women back and perpetuate inequality are key to ending poverty and creating vibrant economies and communities. Ending child, early and forced marriage and meeting the health needs of girls helps them stay in school and in turn, educated women and girls are healthier, have healthier children, and can better contribute to lift themselves and their communities out of poverty; a girl's income will increase by up to 25% every year she stays in school.

**Report Language (edited in red)**

**Title VI Export and Investment Assistance, subheadings: United States International Development Finance Corporation, Corporate Capital Account (Edited in red)**

*Women's Economic Empowerment.*-The DFC shall maximize women's economic

empowerment and entrepreneurship, including through support to minority and women-owned businesses **and should continue to scale up finance for women owned and led businesses and increase economic opportunities for women through their 2x initiative with a goal of at least 50% of the DFC's portfolio meeting this criteria. To support these efforts at least \$3,000,000 of funds appropriated under subsection (1) shall be used to ensure the Development Finance Corporation has sufficient staff and training to fulfill this mandate and the mandate in section 1451 (f) of the BUILD Act of 2018 (division F of Public Law 115–254).**

Justification: Women face numerous barriers in accessing finance and engaging in the economy, many of which are not included as part of traditional private sector due diligence. To ensure that the DFC is able to increase its development impact and fulfill its mandate to reduce gender gaps it not only needs to continue to scale up financing opportunities, but also ensure that all phases of its work take gender into account. Reaching gender parity in the economy could yield tremendous gains for women, their nations, and the global economy, and could unlock [a projected \\$28 trillion in global economic growth](#). However, even prior to COVID-19, the World Economic Forum estimated that it would [take 257 years to achieve gender equality in the economy](#) given the deep social barriers women and girls face. COVID has widened this gap. a. There need to be funds set aside from the program account to ensure that this work can continue.

**4. ADOLESCENT GIRLS' EMPOWERMENT** – We request \$250,000,000 dollars for the coordination and implementation of the [U.S. Global Strategy to Empower Adolescent Girls](#). A 2017 Task Force convened by the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS), which included bipartisan Members of Congress and development experts, recommended funding these kinds of activities at \$250,000,000 annually.

**Justification:** The first-ever strategy of its kind, of any government, the Girl Strategy outlines a comprehensive U.S. government approach to agency-specific responses to educate and empower adolescent girls, as well as mechanisms for inter and intra-agency coordination to harness the full power of the U.S. government and avoid duplication of efforts. The Strategy fulfilled a requirement from the 2013 Violence Against Women Act reauthorization.

Proposed Report Language:

*The Secretary of State, in consultation with the USAID Administrator, is directed to submit to the appropriate congressional committees, not later than 90 days after enactment of this Act, a report on the actions taken over the previous 12 months to implement the U.S. Global Strategy to Empower Adolescent Girls including programs to reduce the incidence of child, early, and forced marriage and address the needs of already married adolescent girls, encourage the abandonment of female genital cutting and address the needs of those who have already undergone these procedures, and the training of staff on the specific challenges and needs of adolescent girls. The report should also be posted on a publicly available website.*



**5. WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP** - We request no less than \$50,000,000 to increase leadership opportunities for women in countries where women and girls suffer discrimination due to law, policy, or practice, by strengthening protections for women's political status, expanding women's participation in political parties and elections, and increasing women's opportunities for leadership positions in the public and private sectors at the local, provincial, and national levels. We also request funding be used to provide particular support to engaging women and girls with intersecting backgrounds (e.g., marginalized due to gender and race, ethnicity, age, ability, immigration status, etc.) in leadership and participation in decision-making at all levels.

Proposed Report Language:

- *The Committee directs that funds appropriated under this, the ESF, DF, CCF, AEECA, and INCLE headings be made available for programs to increase women's participation in the political process, including political parties, elections, and leadership positions in local and national governance and decision-making structures. Funds should be awarded on an open and competitive basis and in accordance with section 7059(b) of the act.*

**6. WOMEN, PEACE, AND SECURITY** – We request that no less than \$190,500,000 be made available to support the implementation of the Women, Peace, and Security Act of 2017, the [U.S. Strategy on Women, Peace, and Security](#), released in June 2019, and its [implementation plans](#) for the U.S. [Department of State](#), [Department of Defense](#), [Department of Homeland Security](#), and [USAID](#), released in June 2020, to expand, and improve coordination of, U.S. Government efforts to empower women as equal partners in conflict prevention, management, and resolution, as well peacebuilding, transitional processes, and relief and reconstruction efforts in countries affected by conflict, crisis, or political transition, as well as to ensure the equitable provision of relief and recovery assistance to women and girls. In addition to programming, capacity-building, and technical assistance, the U.S. should train U.S. military, diplomatic, development, and other relevant staff, contractors, and grantees, as well as partner governments and militaries, on how the inclusion of women increases the effectiveness of security-related policies, programs, and outcomes, as well as on the specific laws, policies, and programming available to enhance women's participation in all spheres of life. The establishment of senior-level gender advisors will improve conflict prevention, management, and resolution efforts by promoting women's contributions to security, through attention at both the policy and operational levels, and strengthen the U.S. Government's ability to effectively and holistically counter adversaries, promote stability, and provide relief in conflict- and crisis-affected areas of the world. Any and all programming must also include reporting requirements, such as indicators, outcomes, analysis, and the collection of sex-disaggregated data, which will serve to identify and address barriers to women's meaningful participation in the prevention, management, and resolution of conflict, as well as peacebuilding efforts, training, and programs.

**Justification:** As the women, peace, and security (WPS) agenda is now enshrined in U.S. law and policy, and linked to the broader National Security Strategy, appropriate budget support is critical to the promotion and sustainment of peace and democracy and the achievement of U.S. foreign policy and national security objectives.

- \$54,000,000 for the Department of Defense for full implementation of the WPS Act, the U.S. National Strategy on WPS, and the FY21 National Defense Authorization Act, including staffing, programming, research, and training.
  - This should include resources for hiring and training full-time equivalent personnel as full-time gender advisors to bolster WPS efforts in the Department of Defense within the six geographic combatant commands, Special Operations Command, Office of the Secretary of Defense, Joint Staff, Defense Security Cooperation Agency, Cyber Command, Transportation Command, Strategic Command, and Space Command.
  - This should also include resources for department-wide training to ensure officials understand how the inclusion of women increases the effectiveness of security-related policies and programs, and specific steps that they can take to promote women’s participation.
  - Furthermore, this should include at least \$9,000,000 to support WPS-related security cooperation and partner capacity-building efforts at the Department of Defense. Such support would facilitate implementation of the WPS Act and of the FY21 National Defense Authorization Act by funding the participation of female forces and the integration of gender perspectives in annual training, education, exercises, and engagements. Including women in international security forces advances the primary purpose of U.S. security assistance—making these forces better and stronger and improving our national security. The U.S. should train its partner militaries on how including women improves security outcomes, and specific steps that they can take to promote women’s participation.
  
- \$54,000,000 for the Department of State for full implementation of the WPS Act and the U.S. National Strategy on WPS, including staffing, programming, research, and training. This should include resources for hiring and training full-time equivalent personnel as full-time gender advisors to bolster WPS efforts in the Department of State, in addition to department-wide training to ensure officials understand how the inclusion of women increases the effectiveness of security-related policies and programs, and specific steps that they can take to promote women’s participation.
  
- \$54,000,000 for USAID for full implementation of the WPS Act and the U.S. National Strategy on WPS, including staffing, programming, research, and training. This should include resources for hiring and training full-time equivalent personnel as full-time gender advisors to bolster WPS efforts in USAID, in addition to agency-wide training to ensure officials understand how the inclusion of women increases the effectiveness of security-related policies and programs, and specific steps that they can take to promote women’s participation.
  
- \$24,000,000 for the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) for the implementation of the WPS Act and the U.S. National Strategy on WPS, including staffing, programming, research, and training. This should include resources for hiring and

training full-time equivalent personnel as full-time gender advisors to bolster WPS efforts in the Department of Homeland Security, in addition to department-wide training to ensure officials understand how the inclusion of women increases the effectiveness of security-related policies and programs, and specific steps that they can take to promote women's participation.

- \$4,500,000 to support State, USAID, DOD, and DHS in conducting coordinated research on the impact of WPS principles on the effectiveness of peace and security-related policies and programs.

**7. WOMEN AND GIRLS AT RISK OF VIOLENT EXTREMISM** - We request not less than \$19,000,000 be made available to support and engage women and girls who are at risk from extremism and conflict and help with the implementation of the [US Strategy to Support Women and Girls at Risk from Violent Extremism](#) and Conflict released publicly in October 2018. This State Department and USAID strategy seeks to “limit the destabilizing effects of violent extremism, including the risks it poses to women and girls, by supporting women and girls as actors in countering terrorist ideology to prevent terrorist radicalization in their families, communities, countries, and online.

**Justification:** An analysis of thirty countries across the Middle East, North Africa and South Asia found that women were substantially more likely than men to be early victims of extremism. Some violent extremist groups use women and girls as a form of currency in a shadow economy, generating revenue from sex trafficking, sexual slavery, and extortion through ransom. According to New America's research, one-third of individuals associated with jihadist-inspired violence inside the United States had a record of domestic abuse or other sexual violence. Extremist groups don't only benefit from subjugating women; they also recruit them to act as informants, facilitators, recruiters, and martyrs. In fact, many extremist groups have made a concerted effort to recruit women to their ranks. Some women are motivated by ideological commitment, similar to potential male fighters. Others join in hopes of gaining freedoms and access to resources.

The U.S. government should increase resources to facilitate women's involvement in efforts to counter terrorism and violent extremism. To address drivers of recruitment, the State Department and USAID should invest in programs to expand gender equality, including women's access to resources. Department of Defense, the State Department, and USAID should invest in women's roles to counter terrorism and violent extremism. This includes through prevention-related funds, but also security funds, such as antiterrorism and law enforcement programs. It is also important to make it easier for proponents of women's involvement in deradicalization efforts to access funding— whether in militaries, police, government, or civil society.

**8. OFFICE OF GLOBAL WOMEN'S ISSUES – U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE** - We request that no less than \$20,000,000 be made available to support the programming of the Office of Global Women's Issues (GWI). The Office supports efforts to ensure that gender equality, including the rights of women and girls, are fully integrated into U.S. foreign policy and programming. These efforts are crucial to ensuring U.S. leadership on gender equality.

**Justification:** Funds requested for the Office of Global Women’s Issues reflect the need for resources to coordinate within the State Department and with other departments/agencies in the interagency on the widespread needs, rights, and interests related to integrating gender equality and women’s rights into U.S. foreign policy. Through more than 20 years of bi-partisan support, interagency collaboration and work, GWI office has ensured concrete advancement for rights of women and girls by leading, co-leading, and directing U.S. efforts in advancing women’s roles in building democracies, facilitating women and girls leadership, supporting entrepreneurship, and providing resources to support survivors of extreme forms of gender-based violence. Such funds will ensure the continued work of this office.

**9. TRACKING EXPENDITURES** - As advocates who work in collaboration with the Administration and members of Congress, we are concerned that the progress that has been made in tracking U.S. investments in gender programming has not been matched by a systematic tracking of expenditures and their impact. This has inhibited our ability to assess how funds have been used and what they have achieved. We strongly suggest including funding in the budget to ensure that financial expenditure tracking systems at the Department of State and USAID are funded and include an explicit focus on gender expenditures in US-funded foreign operations.

Proposed Report Language

*The Committee directs the Secretary of State and the USAID Administrator to submit a report to the Committee not later than 45 days after enactment of this act describing the amounts and uses of funds for programs to promote gender equality, disaggregated by country.*

*The Committee directs that not later than 90 days after the enactment of this act, the Ambassador-at-Large for Global Women's Issues and the USAID Senior Coordinator for Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment shall jointly submit a report on the allocation of funds for gender-related programs and activities for the previous fiscal year, and to post such report on their respective agency websites.*

**10. GENDER ANALYSIS & DATA DISAGGREGATION** – We request no less than \$15 million be made available to USAID for operating expenses to adequately implement its gender analysis requirement (Sec. 3 of the Women’s Entrepreneurship and Economic Empowerment Act) so that gender equality and female empowerment are integrated throughout the Agency’s program cycle and related processes for purposes of strategic planning, project design and implementation, monitoring, and evaluation. The US government must ensure that all strategies, projects and activities are informed by gender analyses that identify, understand, and explain differences in status between genders, the influence of gender roles, structural barriers, and norms and the differing impacts of development efforts on women and men. Additionally, the U.S. should make significant investments in data disaggregation by sex and age to assess the impact of development assistance on women and girls.

Proposed Bill Language

***Title II United States Agency for International Development Operating Expenses***

*For necessary expenses to carry out the provisions of section 667 of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961,*

*\$1,450,000,000 to enhance USAID's efforts to drive innovation, oversee program implementation, improve transparency and accountability, and apply a strong learning agenda for future programming.*

**Proposed Report Language**

***Title II United States Agency for International Development Operating Expenses***

Of the funds made available for USAID operating expenses in Title II of this Act, at least \$15,000,000 shall be made available for additional training, technical assistance, and staff with gender expertise and gender training for the primary purpose of ensuring that USAID has the technical capacity to implement Sec. 3 of the Women's Entrepreneurship and Economic Empowerment Act of 2018 (Public Law 115-428) appropriately across the entire agency. *The Committee provides further that funds appropriated under this heading shall be available subject to the regular notification procedures of the Committees on Appropriations.*

11. **OTHER REQUESTS** – In addition to the priority requests outlined above, the signatories recommend support for other gender-related issues and programs, such as sexual and reproductive health and rights, including bilateral family planning programs and the U.S. contribution to UNFPA, the leading multilateral provider of maternal and reproductive health and GBV services; maternal, newborn, and child health programs; the DREAMS partnership to reduce HIV/AIDS in adolescent girls and young women; and prevention of discrimination and abuse of LGBTI individuals abroad.

We understand you face difficult budget choices and there are many priorities you must consider, but our nation must be a leader in providing these essential resources. We look forward to working with you and with Congress to secure the funding necessary to advance gender equality, which will not only support millions of women and girls, but will in turn promote sustainable development, strengthen national security, and reduce poverty around the world.

Sincerely,

*The Undersigned Organizations*

1. Alliance for Peace Building
2. Amnesty International USA
3. CARE USA
4. Center for Feminist Foreign Policy

5. ChildFund International
6. Clearinghouse on Women's Issues
7. Double Hope Films
8. Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
9. Futures Without Violence
10. Girl Determined
11. Girl Up Initiative Uganda
12. Global Woman P.E.A.C.E. Foundation
13. Global Women's Institute
14. International Action Network for Gender Equity & Law (IANGEL)
15. International Center for Research on Women (ICRW)
16. International Civil Society Action Network (ICAN)
17. Jewish Women International
18. John Snow, Inc.
19. Landesa
20. Last Mile4D
21. Mina's List
22. National Association Social Workers
23. National Resources Center on Domestic Violence
24. PAI
25. Peace Direct
26. Population Council
27. Promundo-US
28. Search for Common Ground
29. Sukaar Welfare Organization
30. The Episcopal Church
31. The WomanStats Project
32. Together for Girls
33. Women's Action for New Directions
34. Women for Afghan Women
35. Women Graduates USA
36. WomenStrong International
37. Women Watch Afrika, Inc.
38. World Education, Inc.
39. Youth Bridge, Inc.