Keeping Girls in School Act
Bill Brief

The Keeping Girls in School Act (H.R. 2153/S.1071) was introduced by Representative Frankel (D-FL) and Representative Brooks (R-IN) in the House and Senator Shaheen (D-NH) and Senator Murkowski (R-AK) in the Senate. This bipartisan bill is designed to ensure that U.S. foreign assistance addresses the barriers that keep more than 130 million girls ages 6-17 globally from enrolling, attending, and graduating school. As the legislation notes, there are many obstacles girls face in accessing education, such as child marriage, safety in and on the way to school, and harmful social norms that prioritize boys’ education over that of girls.

This legislation brings critical attention to the barriers girls face in accessing education, particularly those barriers faced at the secondary level, a time when adolescent girls are most at risk of dropping out of school. Choices made in adolescence have life-long consequences. A girl who is able to remain in a quality educational setting and complete secondary school is much more likely to delay the age at which she is married, have children, and is better able to participate in economic opportunities that will strengthen her future well-being.

BACKGROUND

The Keeping Girls in School Act focuses on closing the gender gap for adolescent girls, especially at the secondary level, a time when girls are most at risk of dropping out due to forced marriage, pregnancy, and other family pressures. The economic benefits of girls’ education are substantial and can help lift households, communities and nations out of poverty. Keeping girls in secondary school could*:

- Add $92 billion to the economies of low and middle-income nations;
- Cut child deaths by 50%;
- Reduce child marriage by 66%;
- Decrease violent conflict by 37%; and
- Increase girls’ future wages by up to 20% for every year enrolled.

Specifically, the Keeping Girls in School Act:

- Outlines & highlights the top 14 barriers girls face when entering & remaining in secondary school.
- Appropriates no new money – is budget neutral. Learn more in Section 5(c).
- Emphasizes both access to & quality of education for girls & requires that assistance programs focus on reducing specific barriers adolescent girls face in attaining educational opportunities.
- Requires that the U.S. Global Strategy to Empower Adolescent Girls be reviewed and updated every 5 years.
- The bill also will help to fight poverty and advance America’s national security interests by promoting opportunities that could lead to more stability abroad.

*Statistics are according to UNESCO, the Education Policy and Data Center, CARE, the Global Partnership for Education, and the World Bank.
To Cosponsor the Keeping Girls in School Act, please contact Devin O’Brien in Sen. Murkowski’s Office at Devin_Brien@murkowski.senate.gov or Daniel Bleiberg in Rep. Frankel’s Office at Daniel.Bleiberg@mail.house.gov

In addition, to cosponsoring we would love for you to join the conversation on the Keeping Girls in School Act through the following tweets:

- 130 million girls around the world are not in school. I support the #KeepingGirlsInSchool Act to ensure more girls attend – and stay – in secondary school. Who’s with me? @GirlUp

- I just met with @GirlUp advocates from my District/State to discuss support for the #KeepingGirlsInSchool Act. This bill helps girls overseas attend and stay in school.

- I’m pleased to support the #KeepingGirlsInSchool Act to ensure all students have equal access to education @GirlUp

About Girl Up:

No matter their background, girls have the power to transform themselves, their communities, and the world around them. Girl Up is a global movement of empowered young women leaders who defend gender equality. Through leadership development training, Girl Up gives girls the resources and platform to start a movement for social change wherever they are. For those who stand with us in this movement, there is no rest until we achieve equal rights for every girl. Because when girls rise, we all rise.

Girl Up was founded by the United Nations Foundation in 2010 and continues to work across a global community of partners to achieve gender equality worldwide.

Learn more at GirlUp.org