

119TH CONGRESS  
1ST SESSION

# H. R. 2614

To establish a program and strategy to support internet freedom and counter censorship efforts in Iran, and for other purposes.

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## IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

APRIL 2, 2025

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina (for himself and Mr. PANETTA) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Affairs, and in addition to the Committees on the Judiciary, Financial Services, and Intelligence (Permanent Select), for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned

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## A BILL

To establish a program and strategy to support internet freedom and counter censorship efforts in Iran, and for other purposes.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*  
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Maximum Support  
5 Act”.

6 **SEC. 2. STATEMENTS OF POLICY.**

7 It is the policy of the United States to provide max-  
8 imum support to the people of Iran in their desire to bring

1 about a new political system in Iran based upon democ-  
2 racy, human rights, and rule of law for all citizens of Iran.

3 **SEC. 3. PROGRAM AND STRATEGY TO SUPPORT INTERNET**  
4 **FREEDOM AND COUNTER CENSORSHIP EF-**  
5 **FORTS IN IRAN.**

6 (a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 180 days after the  
7 date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of State,  
8 in conjunction with the Secretary of the Treasury and the  
9 CEO of the U.S. Agency for Global Media, shall establish  
10 a new interagency task force to support internet freedom  
11 and counter censorship efforts in Iran. In addition the  
12 Secretary of State, Secretary of Treasury and CEO of the  
13 U.S. Agency for Global Media, acting as part of this task  
14 force, shall develop and submit to Congress a strategy to  
15 support the Iranian people in countering state and non-  
16 state actors' efforts to create deliberate barriers to inter-  
17 net access, including shutting down or slowing connectivity  
18 and blocking online content protected by international  
19 human rights standards.

20 (b) ELEMENTS.—The strategy required under sub-  
21 section (a) shall include the following:

22 (1) A description of efforts to establish a Vir-  
23 tual Private Network (VPN) service specifically de-  
24 signed to enable the Iranian people to bypass gov-

1       ernment censorship and access the internet freely.

2       The objectives of this VPN service shall include—

3               (A) ensuring secure and uncensored inter-  
4               net access for users in Iran;

5               (B) providing robust protection against  
6               surveillance and data interception by Iranian  
7               authorities and others;

8               (C) maintaining high standards of speed  
9               and reliability to ensure usability; and

10              (D) regularly updating and adapting the  
11              service to respond to new security challenges  
12              and censorship techniques employed by the Ira-  
13              nian government, IRGC and Iranian judiciary.

14       (2) A description of the use of enhanced sat-  
15       ellite communications through direct-to-cell tech-  
16       nology and eSIM and eSIM device distribution, in-  
17       cluding—

18              (A) the incorporation of services such as  
19              services that provide seamless internet access  
20              directly to cellular devices and other technology  
21              to facilitate seamless internet access in Iran;  
22              and

23              (B) a program for the distribution of  
24              eSIMs and eSIM devices to individuals in Iran,

1 enabling them to connect to satellite internet  
2 services quickly and securely.

3 (3) A description of Iranian regime restrictions  
4 on the import of cell phones—

5 (A) detailing Iranian government, IRGC,  
6 and Iranian judiciary restrictions on iPhone 14,  
7 iPhone 15, and iPhone 16 devices out of fear  
8 of satellite internet technology including re-  
9 quirements that such phones be registered with  
10 the government and the impact of past bans on  
11 such phones;

12 (B) outlining steps to counter the regime’s  
13 efforts to restrict access to devices capable of  
14 utilizing satellite-based internet services; and

15 (C) describing measures by the Secretary  
16 of State to curb any efforts by the regime to  
17 create secondary or black markets that would  
18 allow the Iranian government, IRGC, or Iranian  
19 judiciary or their affiliates to profit from the  
20 sale of these devices through controlled chan-  
21 nels.

22 (4) A detailed vetting plan for technology com-  
23 panies or individuals contracted to expand internet  
24 access in Iran, ensuring that no companies or indi-

1 individuals affiliated with the Iranian regime are in-  
2 volved in initiatives to promote internet freedom.

3 (5) A description of which VPNs in Iran are  
4 built by the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps  
5 (IRGC) and other entities controlled by the Govern-  
6 ment of Iran or its Supreme Leader and how such  
7 VPNs are used by the regime to surveil and monitor  
8 users, as well as a plan to counter these deceptive  
9 tactics and raise public awareness about the risks  
10 associated with regime-affiliated VPNs.

11 (6) A detailed plan to support satellite-to-cell  
12 internet technology in Iran, ensuring that—

13 (A) such technology cannot be censored or  
14 jammed by the regime; and

15 (B) access does not require the transfer or  
16 sale of hardware that could be controlled by the  
17 IRGC or sold on secondary markets.

18 (7) providing secure communication tools,  
19 encryption technology, and cybersecurity software  
20 designed specifically for high-risk users;

21 (8) cybersecurity training programs for Iranian  
22 activists, dissidents, and journalists focused on iden-  
23 tifying regime-sponsored cyberattacks, phishing  
24 schemes, and digital surveillance tactics;

1           (9) rapid response technical support for individ-  
2           uals and organizations experiencing cyber threats or  
3           attacks; and

4           (10) a system of regular evaluation and report-  
5           ing to Congress detailing cybersecurity threats en-  
6           countered and measures undertaken to mitigate such  
7           threats.

8           (c) FORM.—The strategy required under subsection  
9           (a) shall be submitted in unclassified form.

10          (d) IMPLEMENTATION PLAN.—Not later than 60  
11          days after the date on which the strategy required by sub-  
12          section (a) is developed, the task force shall submit to  
13          Congress a plan for implementing the strategy.

14       **SEC. 4. CONFISCATION OF THE ASSETS OF THE GOVERN-**  
15                               **MENT OF IRAN AND PUPPET TERRORIST OR-**  
16                               **GANIZATIONS.**

17          (a) IN GENERAL.—The President shall—

18               (1) confiscate, through instructions or licenses  
19               or in such other manner as the President determines  
20               appropriate, funds of the Government of Iran and  
21               all agents or instrumentalities of the Government of  
22               Iran that are subject to the jurisdiction of the  
23               United States; and

1           (2) deposit funds confiscated under paragraph  
2           (1) in the general fund of the Treasury to be used  
3           for purposes described in subsection (c).

4           (b) VESTING.—All right, title, and interest in funds  
5           confiscated under subsection (a) shall vest in the Govern-  
6           ment of the United States.

7           (c) PURPOSES.—Funding may be provided to provide  
8           maximum support to persons and entities within Iran  
9           which are working for a transition to a democratic govern-  
10          ment based upon human rights and rule of law. To the  
11          extent practicable, funding must be provided to persons  
12          and entities with transparent measurable results, includ-  
13          ing through providing detailed annual information on ex-  
14          penditures and outcomes. In particular, funding may be  
15          provided to:

16               (1) Establish a strikers fund to provide assist-  
17               ance to vetted Iranians engaged in nonviolent strikes  
18               and other forms of nonviolent opposition to the re-  
19               gime in Iran done in a way which does not materi-  
20               ally benefit the regime in Iran.

21               (2) Providing humanitarian assistance and  
22               medical supplies to the people of Iran delivered  
23               through partners that uphold internationally recog-  
24               nized humanitarian principles with robust moni-  
25               toring to ensure assistance is reaching intended

1 beneficiaries in a way which does not materially ben-  
2 efit the regime in Iran.

3 (3) Establish a fund to support efforts to docu-  
4 ment and publicize gross violations of internationally  
5 recognized human rights and international humani-  
6 tarian law in Iran, including efforts related to  
7 extrajudicial killings, torture, severe forms of traf-  
8 ficking in persons such as slavery, forced labor, and  
9 sexual exploitation, and to hold perpetrators ac-  
10 countable.

11 (4) The funding of efforts of the task force to  
12 promote internet freedom in Iran described in sec-  
13 tion 3(a) of this Act.

14 (d) AUDIT.—The Comptroller of the United States,  
15 and the Inspector Generals of the Department of State,  
16 Department of Treasury, and USAID shall report to Con-  
17 gress annually after engaging in annual audits of funds  
18 expended based upon subsection(c), including whether or  
19 not the regime in Iran materially benefitted from any ex-  
20 penditure of funds. If the Comptroller of the United  
21 States, or any of the Inspector Generals, determine that  
22 the regime in Iran has benefited from any expenditure  
23 such expenditures must be immediately terminated, and  
24 any recommendations to prevent future diversion of funds  
25 must be immediately implemented.

1 **SEC. 5. STRATEGY TO ENSURE SANCTIONS DO NOT IMPEDE**  
2 **INTERNET FREEDOM FOR THE PEOPLE OF**  
3 **IRAN.**

4 (a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 180 days after the  
5 date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of State,  
6 in conjunction with the Secretary of the Treasury, shall  
7 develop and submit to Congress a strategy to ensure that  
8 sanctions imposed on the regime in Iran do not inadvert-  
9 ently prevent Iranian civilians from accessing technology  
10 and tools necessary for internet freedom and open commu-  
11 nication.

12 (b) ELEMENTS.—The strategy required under sub-  
13 section (a) shall include—

14 (1) An examination of existing sanctions and  
15 their impact on the availability of internet freedom  
16 tools for the people of Iran, including—

17 (A) an assessment of any unintended re-  
18 strictions that limit access to Virtual Private  
19 Networks (VPNs), secure messaging applica-  
20 tions, satellite communication technology, cloud-  
21 based services, and other tools necessary for cir-  
22 cumventing government censorship; and

23 (B) an analysis of how sanctions may af-  
24 fect the ability of technology companies and  
25 non-governmental organizations to provide serv-

1           ices and support to the Iranian people without  
2           materially benefiting the regime.

3           (2) The issuance of specific licenses and waivers  
4           that facilitate internet freedom in Iran while ensuring that such measures do not enable or provide financial benefit to the regime, including—

7                   (A) the development of clear guidelines for  
8                   private sector entities on how they can provide  
9                   internet-related services to Iranian civilians  
10                  without violating U.S. sanctions;

11                  (B) a streamlined process for approving  
12                  waivers and licenses that support internet access and digital communication tools for the  
13                  Iranian people; and

15                  (C) measures to prevent the misuse of such  
16                  licenses and waivers by entities affiliated with  
17                  the Iranian government or Iranian judiciary or  
18                  the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC),  
19                  or other affiliated of the Iranian government including a regular review process to ensure that  
20                  waivers are not being misused by regime-aligned groups.

23           (3) A plan to work with technology companies,  
24           civil society organizations, and international partners

1 to expand access to censorship-resistant communica-  
2 tion technologies in Iran, including—

3 (A) identifying key stakeholders capable of  
4 providing secure and effective internet access  
5 solutions;

6 (B) ensuring companies seeking to provide  
7 such services are properly vetted to prevent in-  
8 advertent assistance to the Iranian regime; and

9 (C) enhancing public awareness campaigns  
10 within Iran about the availability of secure  
11 internet access tools.

12 (4) A detailed mechanism for continuously mon-  
13 itoring and assessing the effectiveness of these meas-  
14 ures, including—

15 (A) regular reporting to Congress on the  
16 impact of licenses and waivers issued to facili-  
17 tate internet freedom in Iran;

18 (B) recommendations for further actions to  
19 improve access to open and secure communica-  
20 tion technologies; and

21 (C) an evaluation of the Iranian regime's  
22 attempts to counteract these measures and  
23 strategies to mitigate such efforts.

24 (c) FORM.—The strategy required under subsection

25 (a) shall be submitted in unclassified form.

1 (d) IMPLEMENTATION PLAN.—Not later than 60  
2 days after the date on which the strategy required by sub-  
3 section (a) is developed, the task force shall submit to  
4 Congress a plan for implementing the strategy.

5 **SEC. 6. STRATEGY TO PROVIDE MAXIMUM SUPPORT TO**  
6 **THE IRANIAN PEOPLE IN THEIR EFFORTS TO**  
7 **ESTABLISH A NEW POLITICAL SYSTEM BASED**  
8 **ON THE RULE OF LAW, DEMOCRACY, AND**  
9 **HUMAN RIGHTS.**

10 (a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 180 days after the  
11 date of the enactment of this Act, the President shall de-  
12 velop and submit to Congress a strategy detailing steps  
13 to provide maximum support to the Iranian people in their  
14 efforts to bring about a transition to a new political system  
15 and government based on the rule of law, democracy, and  
16 human rights.

17 (b) ELEMENTS.—The strategy required under sub-  
18 section (a) shall include—

19 (1) DIPLOMATIC EFFORTS OF THE DEPART-  
20 MENT OF STATE.—A description of how the Sec-  
21 retary of State will—

22 (A) use diplomatic efforts to support the  
23 Iranian protest movements in their pursuit of  
24 democratic governance; and

1 (B) establish a Special Representative for  
2 Maximum Support including an Office for the  
3 Special Representative to coordinate U.S. Gov-  
4 ernment efforts to assist the Iranian people in  
5 their democratic aspirations and to serve as a  
6 key liaison with international partners in sup-  
7 port of this objective.

8 (2) MAXIMUM ECONOMIC PRESSURE BY THE  
9 DEPARTMENT OF THE TREASURY.—A description of  
10 how the Secretary of the Treasury will—

11 (A) implement and enforce sanctions tar-  
12 geting key sectors of the Iranian economy that  
13 sustain the regime’s oppressive activities;

14 (B) disrupt the financial networks that fa-  
15 cilitate the Iranian regime’s terrorist activities  
16 and human rights abuses; and

17 (C) coordinate with international partners  
18 to maximize the effectiveness of economic meas-  
19 ures aimed at weakening the regime’s ability to  
20 suppress its people.

21 (3) INTELLIGENCE SUPPORT FOR THE IRANIAN  
22 PROTEST MOVEMENT.—A description of how the In-  
23 telligence Community will—

1 (A) use intelligence-gathering capabilities  
2 to monitor and expose the Iranian regime's ef-  
3 forts to suppress dissent and target protestors;

4 (B) provide support to Iranian civil society  
5 actors and opposition groups to enhance their  
6 security and operational capabilities; and

7 (C) assist in identifying and countering  
8 disinformation campaigns initiated by the Ira-  
9 nian regime to delegitimize democratic move-  
10 ments.

11 (4) MEDIA FREEDOM AND INFORMATION CAM-  
12 PAIGNS.—A description of how the United States  
13 Agency for Global Media (USAGM) will—

14 (A) expand and enhance broadcasting ef-  
15 forts to provide the Iranian people with accu-  
16 rate and unbiased news coverage on the situa-  
17 tion in Iran;

18 (B) utilize social media platforms to expose  
19 and highlight the Iranian regime's crimes  
20 against its own people, including human rights  
21 abuses, corruption, and acts of violence against  
22 protestors; and

23 (C) support independent Iranian journal-  
24 ists and media outlets in their efforts to report  
25 freely and counter the regime's propaganda.

1           (5) INTERAGENCY COORDINATION.—A plan for  
2       ensuring coordination between relevant agencies, in-  
3       cluding the Department of State, the Department of  
4       the Treasury, the Intelligence Community, and  
5       USAGM, to ensure a comprehensive and unified ap-  
6       proach in supporting the Iranian people’s pursuit of  
7       democracy.

8       (c) FORM.—The strategy required under subsection  
9   (a) shall be submitted in unclassified form but may include  
10   a classified annex if necessary.

11       (d) IMPLEMENTATION PLAN.—Not later than 60  
12   days after the date on which the strategy required by sub-  
13   section (a) is developed, the task force shall submit to  
14   Congress a plan for implementing the strategy.

15   **SEC. 7. DESIGNATION OF THE IRANIAN MINISTRY OF IN-**  
16                           **TELLIGENCE AND SECURITY AS A FOREIGN**  
17                           **TERRORIST ORGANIZATION.**

18       (a) FINDINGS.—Congress finds the following:

19           (1) The Iranian Ministry of Intelligence and Se-  
20       curity (MOIS) is the primary intelligence apparatus  
21       of the Government of Iran, responsible for espio-  
22       nage, covert operations, surveillance, cyberattacks,  
23       kidnappings, assassinations of dissidents abroad,  
24       and direct support for terrorist proxies.

1           (2) MOIS provides financial, logistical, and  
2           operational support to terrorist groups already des-  
3           ignated as Foreign Terrorist Organizations by the  
4           United States, including Hezbollah and designated  
5           militias operating in the Middle East.

6           (3) MOIS poses a direct and ongoing threat to  
7           the national security of the United States, American  
8           citizens abroad, and U.S. allies through continued  
9           support for terrorism, espionage operations, and acts  
10          of violence.

11          (b) SENSE OF CONGRESS.—It is the sense of Con-  
12          gress that—

13               (1) the activities of MOIS satisfy the statutory  
14               criteria for designation as a Foreign Terrorist Orga-  
15               nization under section 219 of the Immigration and  
16               Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. 1189); and

17               (2) formally designating MOIS as an FTO  
18               would advance the national security interests of the  
19               United States, strengthen enforcement against its  
20               global operations, and enhance international efforts  
21               to isolate its terrorist networks.

22          (c) DETERMINATION AND REPORT.—

23               (1) REQUIREMENT FOR DETERMINATION.—Not  
24               later than 90 days after the date of the enactment  
25               of this Act, the Secretary of State, in consultation

1 with the Secretary of the Treasury and the Attorney  
2 General, shall determine, pursuant to the criteria  
3 specified in section 219 of the Immigration and Na-  
4 tionality Act (8 U.S.C. 1189), whether MOIS meets  
5 the criteria to be designated as a Foreign Terrorist  
6 Organization.

7 (2) DESIGNATION.—If the Secretary of State  
8 determines that MOIS meets such criteria, con-  
9 sistent with section 219 of the Immigration and Na-  
10 tionality Act (8 U.S.C. 1189), the Secretary shall  
11 designate MOIS as a Foreign Terrorist Organization  
12 and promptly submit to the appropriate congres-  
13 sional committees a detailed justification for such  
14 designation, including an assessment of threats  
15 posed by MOIS.

16 **SEC. 8. STRATEGY TO ENCOURAGE DEFECTIONS FROM THE**  
17 **GOVERNMENT OF IRAN.**

18 (a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 180 days after the  
19 enactment of this Act, the Secretary of State, in consulta-  
20 tion with the Secretary of the Treasury and Director of  
21 National Intelligence, shall develop and submit to Con-  
22 gress a strategy aimed at encouraging and facilitating de-  
23 fections by Iranian officials and members of security  
24 forces who seek to support democratic change in Iran.

1 (b) ELEMENTS.—The strategy required under sub-  
2 section (a) shall include—

3 (1) identification of mechanisms to securely  
4 communicate with potential defectors, including se-  
5 cure digital channels utilizing encryption tech-  
6 nologies and private intermediaries;

7 (2) measures providing assurances of safety and  
8 security to defectors and their families;

9 (3) establishment of a dedicated interagency  
10 working group tasked with managing defections, en-  
11 suring defector safety, verifying information pro-  
12 vided by defectors, and mitigating potential intel-  
13 ligence risks;

14 (4) incentives for defectors who can signifi-  
15 cantly contribute to democratic change or who pro-  
16 vide actionable intelligence about regime operations,  
17 including potential financial assistance, employment  
18 support, and housing assistance in coordination with  
19 relevant domestic agencies;

20 (5) measures for publicizing successful defec-  
21 tions, when appropriate and consistent with security  
22 protocols, to encourage additional defections within  
23 the regime; and

24 (6) coordination with international partners to  
25 share best practices, jointly facilitate defections, and

1 ensure defectors receive international protection, as  
2 needed.

3 (c) FORM.—The strategy required under subsection  
4 (a) shall be submitted in unclassified form but may con-  
5 tain a classified annex if necessary.

6 (d) IMPLEMENTATION PLAN.—Not later than 60  
7 days after the submission of the strategy, the interagency  
8 working group shall submit to Congress a detailed imple-  
9 mentation plan for the strategy.

10 **SEC. 9. CYBERSECURITY ASSISTANCE TO IRANIAN DIS-**  
11 **SIDENTS.**

12 (a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of State, in coordi-  
13 nation with the Director of National Intelligence, shall es-  
14 tablish a cybersecurity support program specifically tai-  
15 lored to assist Iranian dissidents, journalists, and civil so-  
16 ciety organizations in countering cyber threats posed by  
17 the Iranian regime.

18 (b) ELEMENTS.—The cybersecurity support program  
19 shall include—

20 (1) providing secure communication tools,  
21 encryption technology, and cybersecurity software  
22 designed specifically for high-risk users;

23 (2) cybersecurity training programs for Iranian  
24 activists, dissidents, and journalists focused on iden-

1       tifying regime-sponsored cyberattacks, phishing  
2       schemes, and digital surveillance tactics;

3               (3) rapid response technical support for individ-  
4       uals and organizations experiencing cyber threats or  
5       attacks; and

6               (4) a system of regular evaluation and report-  
7       ing to Congress detailing cybersecurity threats en-  
8       countered and measures undertaken to mitigate such  
9       threats.

10 **SEC. 10. STRATEGY TO ENCOURAGE DEFECTIONS FROM**  
11 **THE GOVERNMENT OF IRAN.**

12       (a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 180 days after the  
13 enactment of this Act, the Secretary of State, in consulta-  
14 tion with the Secretary of the Treasury and Director of  
15 National Intelligence, shall develop and submit to Con-  
16 gress a strategy aimed at encouraging defections by Ira-  
17 nian officials and members of security forces who seek to  
18 support democratic change in Iran.

19       (b) STRATEGY DESCRIBED.—The strategy required  
20 under subsection (a) shall include—

21               (1) identification of mechanisms to securely  
22       communicate with potential defectors, including se-  
23       cure digital channels utilizing encryption tech-  
24       nologies and private intermediaries;

1           (2) measures providing assurances of safety and  
2 security to defectors and their families;

3           (3) establishment of a dedicated interagency  
4 working group tasked with managing defections, en-  
5 suring defector safety, verifying information pro-  
6 vided by defectors, and mitigating potential intel-  
7 ligence risks;

8           (4) incentives for defectors who can signifi-  
9 cantly contribute to democratic change or who pro-  
10 vide actionable intelligence about regime operations,  
11 including potential financial assistance, employment  
12 support, and housing assistance in coordination with  
13 relevant domestic agencies;

14           (5) measures for publicizing successful defec-  
15 tions, when appropriate and consistent with security  
16 protocols, to encourage additional defections within  
17 the regime; and

18           (6) coordination with international partners to  
19 share best practices, jointly facilitate defections, and  
20 ensure defectors receive international protection, as  
21 needed.

22       (c) FORM.—The strategy required under subsection  
23 (a) shall be submitted in unclassified form but may con-  
24 tain a classified annex if necessary.

1       (d) IMPLEMENTATION PLAN.—Not later than 60  
2 days after the submission of the strategy, the interagency  
3 working group shall submit to Congress a detailed imple-  
4 mentation plan for the strategy.

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