

119TH CONGRESS
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H. R. 6056

To establish in the Department of State a Special Envoy for the Human Rights of LGBTQI+ Peoples, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

NOVEMBER 17, 2025

Mr. GARCIA of California (for himself, Ms. JACOBS, Ms. DELBENE, Mr. PETERS, Ms. DEGETTE, Mr. CASTRO of Texas, Ms. MATSUI, Ms. TLAIB, Ms. PINGREE, Mr. TONKO, Mr. AMO, Mr. MAGAZINER, Ms. DAVIDS of Kansas, Mr. DAVID SCOTT of Georgia, Mr. VEASEY, Mr. POCAN, Mr. SCHNEIDER, Ms. UNDERWOOD, Mr. RUIZ, Mr. HUFFMAN, Mr. NADLER, Ms. DEAN of Pennsylvania, Mr. LIEU, Mr. CARTER of Louisiana, Mrs. CHERFILUS-McCORMICK, Ms. JAYAPAL, Mr. SMITH of Washington, Mr. COHEN, Mr. BEYER, Mr. MULLIN, Mr. KRISHNAMOORTHY, Mr. DOGGETT, Ms. DELAURO, Mr. COSTA, Mr. SWALWELL, Ms. KELLY of Illinois, Mr. SORENSEN, Mr. GOLDMAN of New York, Mrs. DINGELL, Mr. LARSEN of Washington, Ms. MCBRIDE, Mr. VARGAS, Mr. BELL, Ms. TITUS, Ms. ROSS, Mr. NEAL, Mr. GARCÍA of Illinois, Mr. MANNION, Ms. CRAIG, Mr. DESAULNIER, Mr. CASTEN, Mr. CARSON, Mrs. HAYES, Ms. CHU, Mr. ESPAILLAT, Mr. LYNCH, Ms. MCCLELLAN, Mrs. BEATTY, Mr. MCGOVERN, Mr. DAVIS of Illinois, Ms. MENG, Mr. THANEDAR, Ms. LEE of Pennsylvania, Mr. CARBAJAL, Mr. MOSKOWITZ, Ms. SCHOLTEN, Ms. ANSARI, Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ, Ms. PETTERSEN, Ms. DEXTER, Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia, Mr. GOTTHEIMER, and Ms. SCHAKOWSKY) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Affairs

A BILL

To establish in the Department of State a Special Envoy for the Human Rights of LGBTQI+ Peoples, 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 “International Human
5 Rights Defense Act of 2025”.

6 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

7 Congress makes the following findings:

8 (1) Around the world, LGBTQI+ people face
9 criminalization, violence, discrimination, and stigma
10 based on their sexual orientation, gender identity, or
11 sex characteristics.

12 (2) 64 countries have national laws that crim-
13 inalize same-sex relations and at least 42 United
14 Nations member states have legal barriers for free-
15 dom of expression on issues related to sexual and
16 gender diversity. That is equal to roughly 35 percent
17 of United Nations member states.

18 (3) 12 countries have jurisdictions in which the
19 death penalty can be imposed for private, consensual
20 same-sex sexual activity.

21 (4) Despite recent progress made toward de-
22 criminalization, marriage equality, and legal gender
23 recognition, several countries have introduced anti-
24 LGBTQI+ legislation that would further criminalize
25 or stigmatize LGBTQI+ people. This includes a

1 draconian bill under review in Ghana that would
2 outlaw not only LGBTQI+ relationships and identi-
3 ties, but also advocacy on behalf of the human rights
4 of LGBTQI+ persons.

5 (5) Human Rights Watch and other human
6 rights organizations have documented the use of the
7 forensically discredited practice of forced anal exams
8 to try to substantiate allegations of same-sex sexual
9 activity. This humiliating practice is typically con-
10 ducted by law enforcement officials working in tan-
11 dem with medical personnel. The United Nations
12 Special Rapporteur on Torture has described forced
13 anal examinations as a form of torture or cruel, in-
14 human, and degrading treatment, and the United
15 Nations Office of the High Commissioner for
16 Human Rights issued a report in 2015 calling for
17 governments to ban the practice.

18 (6) Across the world, freedom of association is
19 increasingly under attack, with the passage and en-
20 forcement of laws that prevent or revoke the reg-
21 istration of non-governmental organizations, particu-
22 larly those working to advance and defend the
23 human rights of LGBTQI+ persons.

24 (7) Extreme violence and insecurity in Latin
25 America has driven LGBTQI+ people to flee their

1 countries of origin to the United States for protec-
2 tion. Yet LGBTQI+ asylum seekers are routinely
3 denied entry and face additional violence, and many
4 have been returned to face persecution in their home
5 countries or in third countries that are not safe.

6 (8) Laws, policies, and practices that crim-
7 inalize and stigmatize LGBTQI+ people deter indi-
8 viduals and communities from seeking health care.
9 Gay, bisexual, and other men who have sex with men
10 and transgender people are particularly vulnerable to
11 discrimination and exclusion in health care settings,
12 thereby increasing risk of HIV transmission. De-
13 criminalization and stigma reduction are necessary
14 to achieve global targets for epidemic control of
15 HIV.

16 (9) The Trans Murder Monitoring Project,
17 which monitors homicides of transgender individuals,
18 documented at least 350 trans and gender-diverse
19 people killed between October 1, 2023, and Sep-
20 tember 30, 2024. Of these cases, 73 percent of mur-
21 ders occurred in Latin America and the Caribbean,
22 with 30 percent of the total occurring in Brazil.

23 (10) Intersex people are subject to medically
24 unnecessary surgeries, often without prior and in-
25 formed consent, leading to lifelong medical complica-

1 tions and increased mistrust of health care pro-
2 viders. Intersex people experience widespread dis-
3 crimination and lack of understanding about their
4 medical needs.

5 (11) Violence and discrimination based on sex-
6 ual orientation, gender identity (including gender ex-
7 pression), and sex characteristics are documented in
8 the Department of State’s annual Country Reports
9 on Human Rights Practices. The report covering
10 2023 continues to show a clear pattern of human
11 rights violations or abuses in every region of the
12 world based on sexual orientation, gender identity,
13 or sex characteristics. These violations or abuses in-
14 clude murder, rape, torture, death threats, extortion,
15 and imprisonment, as well as loss of employment,
16 housing, access to health care, and other forms of
17 societal stigma and discrimination. The reports fur-
18 ther document LGBTQI+-specific restrictions on
19 basic freedoms of assembly, press, and speech in
20 every region of the world.

21 (12) On December 6, 2011, President Barack
22 Obama released the “Presidential Memorandum—
23 International Initiatives to Advance the Human
24 Rights of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender
25 Persons”. The memorandum directed all Federal

1 agencies engaged abroad to ensure that United
2 States diplomacy and foreign assistance promote and
3 protect the human rights of LGBTI+ persons.

4 (13) On February 4, 2021, President Joe Biden
5 issued a similar memorandum, the “Memorandum
6 on Advancing the Human Rights of Lesbian, Gay,
7 Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, and Intersex Persons
8 Around the World”, to promote and protect the
9 human rights of LGBTQI+ persons and establish
10 that it is the “policy of the United States to pursue
11 an end to violence and discrimination on the basis
12 of sexual orientation, gender identity or expression,
13 or sex characteristics, and to lead by the power of
14 our example in the cause of advancing the human
15 rights of LGBTQI+ persons around the world”.

16 (14) On February 23, 2015, Secretary of State
17 John Kerry appointed senior diplomat Randy Berry
18 as the Department of State’s first-ever Special
19 Envoy for the Human Rights of LGBTI Persons.
20 No person was named to that position during the
21 Trump Administration.

22 (15) On June 25, 2021, President Joe Biden
23 announced the appointment of Jessica Stern to serve
24 as the United States Special Envoy to Advance the

1 Human Rights of LGBTQI+ Persons. She joined
2 the Department of State on September 27, 2021.

3 (16) On June 30, 2016, the United Nations
4 Human Rights Council passed a resolution cospon-
5 sored by the United States that established an Inde-
6 pendent Expert on violence and discrimination based
7 on sexual orientation and gender identity to help
8 monitor and track discrimination and violence expe-
9 rienced by LGBTQI+ persons around the world.

10 (17) In May 2020, the United Nations Inde-
11 pendent Expert on protection against violence and
12 discrimination based on sexual orientation and gen-
13 der identity released a report on so-called “conver-
14 sion therapy”, which is an umbrella term used to de-
15 scribe interventions based on a belief that a person’s
16 sexual orientation or gender identity can and should
17 be changed. The report concluded that such prac-
18 tices represent significant violations of rights to per-
19 sonal autonomy, health, and free expression and are
20 “by their very nature degrading, inhuman and cruel
21 and create a significant risk of torture”. The Inde-
22 pendent Expert noted “the psychological pain and
23 suffering inflicted by practices of ‘conversion ther-
24 apy’ are deep and long-lasting and often exacerbate

1 the risk of suicide’’, and called for a global ban on
2 conversion therapy.

3 **SEC. 3. STATEMENT OF POLICY.**

4 It is the policy of the United States—

5 (1) to take effective action to prevent and re-
6 spond to discrimination and violence against all peo-
7 ple on any basis internationally, including sexual ori-
8 entation, gender identity, and sex characteristics,
9 and that human rights policy includes attention to
10 criminalization, violence, and other discrimination
11 against LGBTQI+ people;

12 (2) to systematically integrate and coordinate
13 into United States foreign policy efforts to prevent
14 and respond to criminalization, discrimination, and
15 violence against LGBTQI+ people internationally;

16 (3) to support and build local capacity in coun-
17 tries around the world, including of governments at
18 all levels and nongovernmental organizations, to pre-
19 vent and respond to criminalization, discrimination,
20 and violence against LGBTQI+ people internation-
21 ally;

22 (4) to consult, cooperate, coordinate, and col-
23 laborate with a wide variety of nongovernmental
24 partners, including faith-based organizations and
25 LGBTQI+-led organizations, with demonstrated ex-

1 perience in preventing and responding to criminal-
2 ization, discrimination, and violence against
3 LGBTQI+ people internationally;

4 (5) to employ a multisectoral approach to pre-
5 venting and responding to criminalization, discrimi-
6 nation, and violence against LGBTQI+ people inter-
7 nationally, including activities in the economic, edu-
8 cation, health, nutrition, legal, and judicial sectors;

9 (6) to work at all levels, from the individual to
10 the family, community, local, national, and inter-
11 national levels, to prevent and respond to criminal-
12 ization, discrimination, and violence against
13 LGBTQI+ people internationally;

14 (7) to enhance training by United States per-
15 sonnel of professional foreign military and police
16 forces and judicial officials to include appropriate
17 and thorough LGBTQI+-specific instruction on pre-
18 venting and responding to criminalization, discrimi-
19 nation, and violence based on sexual orientation,
20 gender identity, and sex characteristics;

21 (8) to engage non-LGBTQI+ people as allies
22 and partners, as an essential element of making sus-
23 tained reductions in criminalization, discrimination,
24 and violence against LGBTQI+ people internation-
25 ally;

1 (9) to require that all recipients of United
2 States Government Federal funding, including all
3 contractors, grants, and cooperative agreements for
4 both acquisition and assistance, establish appropriate
5 nondiscrimination policies that are inclusive of
6 sexual orientation, gender identity, and sex characteristics,
7 among other characteristics and protected statuses, and take effective
8 measures to ensure the protection and safety of employed and contracted
9 staff, as well as protection of the program beneficiaries;
10

11 (10) to exert sustained international leadership,
12 including in bilateral and multilateral fora, to prevent and respond to
13 criminalization, discrimination, and violence against LGBTQI+ people
14 internationally;
15

16 (11) to ensure that international efforts to combat HIV/AIDS
17 take all appropriate measures to support at-risk communities, including
18 LGBTQI+ people, and to create enabling legal environments for
19 these communities;
20

21 (12) to work with governments and nongovernmental
22 organizations around the world to develop and implement regional
23 strategies to decriminalize homosexuality and to counteract other
24 restrictions
25

1 on the human rights of LGBTQI+ people, including
2 restrictions on LGBTQI+ organizations and so-
3 called LGBTQI+ propaganda laws; and

4 (13) to ensure that individuals who have a well-
5 founded fear of persecution on account of being
6 LGBTQI+ or supporting LGBTQI+ rights have
7 the opportunity to seek protection in the United
8 States.

9 **SEC. 4. SPECIAL ENVOY FOR THE HUMAN RIGHTS OF**
10 **LGBTQI+ PEOPLE.**

11 (a) ESTABLISHMENT.—

12 (1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of State shall
13 establish in the Department of State a permanent
14 Special Envoy for the Human Rights of LGBTQI+
15 People (in this section referred to as the “Special
16 Envoy”), who shall be appointed by the President.

17 (2) RANK.—The President may appoint the
18 Special Envoy at the rank of Ambassador, by and
19 with the advice and consent of the Senate.

20 (b) PURPOSE.—In addition to the duties described in
21 subsection (c) and those duties determined by the Presi-
22 dent and the Secretary of State, the Special Envoy shall
23 direct efforts of the United States Government relating
24 to United States foreign policy, as directed by the Presi-
25 dent and the Secretary, regarding human rights abuses

1 against LGBTQI+ people and communities internation-
2 ally and the advancement of human rights for LGBTQI+
3 people, and shall represent the United States internation-
4 ally in bilateral and multilateral engagement on such mat-
5 ters.

6 (c) DUTIES.—The Special Envoy—

7 (1) shall serve as the principal advisor to the
8 Secretary of State regarding the human rights of
9 LGBTQI+ people internationally; and

10 (2) at the direction of the Secretary of State—

11 (A) shall, notwithstanding any other provi-
12 sion of law, direct activities, policies, programs,
13 and funding relating to the human rights of
14 LGBTQI+ people and the advancement of
15 LGBTQI+ human rights and social inclusion
16 initiatives internationally, for all bureaus and
17 offices of the Department of State, and shall
18 lead the coordination of relevant United States
19 Government policies and international programs
20 for all other Federal agencies relating to such
21 matters;

22 (B) shall represent the United States in
23 diplomatic matters, including in bilateral and
24 multilateral forums, relevant to the human
25 rights and social inclusion of LGBTQI+ people,

1 including addressing criminalization, discrimi-
2 nation, and violence against LGBTQI+ people
3 internationally;

4 (C) shall direct, as appropriate, United
5 States Government resources to respond to
6 needs for protection, integration, resettlement,
7 and empowerment of LGBTQI+ people in
8 United States Government policies and inter-
9 national programs, including to prevent and re-
10 spond to criminalization, discrimination, and vi-
11 olence against LGBTQI+ people internation-
12 ally;

13 (D) shall lead interagency coordination on
14 the foreign policy, humanitarian, and develop-
15 ment priorities related to the human rights of
16 LGBTQI+ people internationally; and

17 (E) shall conduct regular consultation with
18 nongovernmental organizations working to pre-
19 vent and respond to criminalization, discrimina-
20 tion, and violence against LGBTQI+ people
21 internationally.

22 (d) BRIEFINGS AND ASSESSMENTS.—Not later than
23 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, and
24 annually thereafter, the Special Envoy shall provide to the
25 appropriate congressional committees a briefing on the

1 status of the human rights and social inclusion of
2 LGBTQI+ people internationally, as well as on the status
3 of programs and response strategies of the United States
4 Government to address criminalization, discrimination,
5 and violence against LGBTQI+ people internationally.

6 (e) UNITED STATES POLICY TO PREVENT AND RE-
7 SPOND TO CRIMINALIZATION, DISCRIMINATION, AND VIO-
8 LENCE AGAINST LGBTQI+ PEOPLE GLOBALLY.—

9 (1) GLOBAL STRATEGY REQUIREMENT.—Not
10 later than 180 days after the date of the enactment
11 of this Act, and bi-annually thereafter, the Special
12 Envoy shall develop or update, as the case may be,
13 a United States global strategy to prevent and re-
14 spond to criminalization, discrimination, and violence
15 against LGBTQI+ people internationally. The Spe-
16 cial Envoy shall submit the global strategy to the
17 appropriate congressional committees and, if prac-
18 ticable, make the global strategy available to the
19 public.

20 (2) COLLABORATION AND COORDINATION.—In
21 developing the global strategy required under para-
22 graph (1), the Special Envoy shall consult with—

23 (A) mid- and high-level officials of relevant
24 Federal agencies; and

1 (B) representatives of nongovernmental or-
2 ganizations with demonstrated experience in ad-
3 dressing criminalization, discrimination, and vi-
4 olence against LGBTQI+ people internation-
5 ally, or promoting equal rights and social inclu-
6 sion for LGBTQI+ people internationally.

7 (f) MONITORING THE UNITED STATES STRATEGY TO
8 PREVENT AND RESPOND TO CRIMINALIZATION, DISCRIMI-
9 NATION, AND VIOLENCE AGAINST LGBTQI+ PEOPLE
10 AND COMMUNITIES INTERNATIONALLY.—In each global
11 strategy submitted under subsection (e), the Special
12 Envoy shall include an analysis of promising practices for
13 preventing and addressing criminalization, discrimination,
14 and violence against LGBTQI+ people and communities
15 internationally, including—

16 (1) a description of successful efforts by foreign
17 governments and nongovernmental organizations to
18 prevent and respond to criminalization, discrimina-
19 tion, and violence against LGBTQI+ people and
20 communities internationally;

21 (2) recommendations related to promising prac-
22 tices, effective strategies, and improvements to en-
23 hance the impact of such prevention and response
24 efforts; and

1 (3) the impact of activities funded by the global
2 strategy in preventing and reducing criminalization,
3 discrimination, and violence against LGBTQI+ peo-
4 ple.

5 **SEC. 5. DOCUMENTING AND RESPONDING TO BIAS-MOTI-**
6 **VATED VIOLENCE AGAINST LGBTQI+ PEOPLE**
7 **ABROAD.**

8 (a) INFORMATION REQUIRED TO BE INCLUDED IN
9 ANNUAL COUNTRY REPORTS ON HUMAN RIGHTS PRAC-
10 TICES.—

11 (1) SECTION 116.—Section 116(d) of the For-
12 eign Assistance Act of 1961 (22 U.S.C. 2151n(d))
13 is amended—

14 (A) in paragraph (11)(C), by striking “;
15 and” and inserting a semicolon;

16 (B) in paragraph (12)(C)(ii), by striking
17 the period at the end and inserting “; and”;
18 and

19 (C) by adding at the end the following new
20 paragraph:

21 “(13) wherever applicable, the nature and ex-
22 tent of criminalization, discrimination, and violence
23 by state and non-state actors based on sexual ori-
24 entation or gender identity, as those terms are de-
25 fined in section 7 of the International Human

1 Rights Defense Act of 2025, or sex characteristics,
2 including an identification of those countries that
3 have adopted laws or constitutional provisions that
4 criminalize or discriminate based on such sexual ori-
5 entation, gender identity, or sex characteristics, in-
6 cluding descriptions of such laws and provisions.”.

7 (2) SECTION 502B.—Section 502B of the For-
8 eign Assistance Act of 1961 (22 U.S.C. 2304) is
9 amended—

10 (A) by redesignating the second subsection

11 (i) (relating to child marriage status) as sub-
12 section (j); and

13 (B) by adding at the end the following new
14 subsection:

15 “(k) SEXUAL ORIENTATION, GENDER IDENTITY,
16 AND SEX CHARACTERISTICS.—The report required under
17 subsection (b) shall include, wherever applicable, the na-
18 ture and extent of criminalization, discrimination, and vio-
19 lence by state and non-state actors based on sexual ori-
20 entation or gender identity, as those terms are defined in
21 section 7 of the International Human Rights Defense Act
22 of 2025, or sex characteristics, including an identification
23 of those countries that have adopted laws or constitutional
24 provisions that criminalize or discriminate based on such

1 sexual orientation, gender identity, or sex characteristics,
2 including descriptions of such laws and provisions.”.

3 **SEC. 6. IMPLEMENTATION OF THE UNITED STATES STRAT-**
4 **EGY TO PREVENT AND RESPOND TO CRIM-**
5 **INALIZATION, DISCRIMINATION, AND VIO-**
6 **LENCE AGAINST LGBTQI+ PEOPLE AND COM-**
7 **MUNITIES INTERNATIONALLY.**

8 The Secretary of State is authorized to provide assist-
9 ance to prevent and respond to criminalization, discrimi-
10 nation, and violence against LGBTQI+ people inter-
11 nationally. Such assistance may include the following ac-
12 tivities:

13 (1) Development and implementation of assist-
14 ance programs that respond to human rights abuses
15 against, and the social and economic exclusion of,
16 LGBTQI+ people.

17 (2) Support and capacity building for the devel-
18 opment and enforcement of the laws of foreign gov-
19 ernments pertaining to relevant civil and criminal,
20 legal and judicial sanctions, protection, and training.

21 (3) Enhancement of health sector capacity to
22 detect, prevent, and respond to violence against
23 LGBTQI+ people and communities internationally,
24 and to combat HIV/AIDS in the LGBTQI+ commu-
25 nity internationally, in close coordination with the

1 Office of the Global AIDS Coordinator and Health
2 Diplomacy of the Department of State.

3 (4) Development of a leadership program for
4 international LGBTQI+ activists that will foster
5 collaboration and knowledge sharing across the
6 world.

7 **SEC. 7. DEFINITIONS.**

8 In this Act:

9 (1) APPROPRIATE CONGRESSIONAL COMMIT-
10 TEES.—The term “appropriate congressional com-
11 mittees” means—

12 (A) the Committee on Foreign Relations
13 and the Committee on Appropriations of the
14 Senate; and

15 (B) the Committee on Foreign Affairs and
16 the Committee on Appropriations of the House
17 of Representatives.

18 (2) GENDER IDENTITY.—The term “gender
19 identity” means the gender-related identity, appear-
20 ance, or mannerisms, or other gender-related charac-
21 teristics of an individual, regardless of the individ-
22 ual’s designated sex at birth.

23 (3) INTERSEX.—The term “intersex” means in-
24 dividuals born with sex characteristics (including
25 genitals, gonads, or chromosome patterns) that vary

1 from typical binary notions of male or female bodies
2 and is an umbrella term used to describe a wide
3 range of natural bodily variations.

4 (4) LGBTQI+.—The term “LGBTQI+”
5 means lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, or
6 intersex.

7 (5) SEXUAL ORIENTATION.—The term “sexual
8 orientation” means actual or perceived homosex-
9 uality, heterosexuality, or bisexuality.

○