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To promote human rights, internet freedom and accountability in Iran, and
for other purposes.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

FEBRUARY 24, 2026

Mr. MCCORMICK (for himself and Ms. ROSEN) introduced the following bill;
which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations

A BILL

To promote human rights, internet freedom and
accountability 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 “Iran Human Rights,
5 Internet Freedom, and Accountability Act of 2026”.

6 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS; STATEMENT OF POLICY.**

7 (a) FINDINGS.—Congress makes the following find-
8 ings:

9 (1) For nearly five decades, the people of Iran
10 have endured brutal repression under the Govern-

1 ment of the Islamic Republic of Iran, a regime that
2 denies basic human rights, silences dissidents, and
3 responds to peaceful protest with violence.

4 (2) The people of Iran have repeatedly and cou-
5 rageously taken to the streets to demand economic
6 opportunity, human rights, dignity, and freedom.

7 (3) During the 2026 protests, the Government
8 of the Islamic Republic of Iran responded with bru-
9 tality by reportedly killing tens of thousands of peo-
10 ple and wounding thousands more, arresting tens of
11 thousands, and restricting internet access and tele-
12 phone lines.

13 (4) The people of Iran are protesting the Ira-
14 nian regime's economic mismanagement, corruption,
15 internal suppression, and unjust executions.

16 (5) Access to free expression, open information,
17 and uncensored communication are fundamental
18 human rights and critical to the survival of the Ira-
19 nian protestors.

20 (6) Thanks in part to United States-funded ef-
21 forts to support human rights and open internet ac-
22 cess, the Iranian people are consistently found to be
23 one of the most pro-American populations in the
24 Middle East.

1 (7) The inspiring 2022 Women, Life, Freedom
2 protests demanded an end to the Islamic Republic
3 and its violence, particularly against Iranian women
4 and ethnic minorities.

5 (8) The barbaric so-called “morality police” and
6 other arms of state suppression have a lengthy his-
7 tory of repressing the Iranian people’s fundamental
8 freedoms.

9 (9) The Iranian regime has engaged in system-
10 atic efforts to intimidate, harass, detain, and harm
11 political dissidents, activists, and journalists both
12 within Iran and beyond its borders.

13 (10) The people of Iran deserve the right to
14 dignity, democracy, and self-determination and to be
15 free from the brutality of the Government of the Is-
16 lamic Republic of Iran.

17 (b) STATEMENT OF POLICY.—It shall be the policy
18 of the United States—

19 (1) to recognize the right of the Iranian people
20 to freely determine, through free and fair elections,
21 the future leadership of their country;

22 (2) to facilitate the immediate expansion of un-
23 restricted internet access and civilian lines of com-
24 munication across Iran;

1 (3) to support the internationally recognized
2 human rights of Iranians and United States pro-
3 grams to assist Iranian civil society, including in
4 their credible documentation, reporting, and ac-
5 countability efforts of abuses in Iran;

6 (4) to fully enforce sanctions against regime
7 violators of internationally recognized human rights
8 and their family members, including any family
9 members and associates in the United States that
10 continue to directly or indirectly provide support to
11 the regime; and

12 (5) to work in coordination with its allies to
13 consider appropriate measures to deter further lethal
14 violence against protesters.

15 **SEC. 3. IMPROVED COORDINATION OF EFFORTS TO PRO-**
16 **MOTE INTERNET FREEDOM IN IRAN.**

17 (a) DUTIES OF THE SECRETARY OF STATE.—The
18 Secretary of State shall be the Federal official with the
19 primary responsibility for—

20 (1) promoting widespread internet freedom in
21 Iran and expanding access to information for Ira-
22 nian citizens;

23 (2) coordinating all efforts carried out by Fed-
24 eral departments and agencies that relate to digital
25 freedom initiatives in Iran; and

1 (3) serving as the principal official responsible
2 for updating and carrying out the strategy required
3 under section 414 of the Iran Threat Reduction and
4 Syria Human Rights Act of 2012 (22 U.S.C. 8754).

5 (b) UPDATES TO COMPREHENSIVE STRATEGY TO
6 PROMOTE INTERNET FREEDOM AND ACCESS TO INFOR-
7 MATION IN IRAN.—

8 (1) UPDATES.—Section 414 of the Iran Threat
9 Reduction and Syria Human Rights Act of 2012 (22
10 U.S.C. 8754) is amended—

11 (A) by striking “Not later than” and in-
12 serting “(A) INITIAL STRATEGY.—Not later
13 than”;

14 (B) by redesignating paragraphs (11) and
15 (12) as paragraphs (14) and (15), respectively;

16 (C) by inserting after paragraph (10) the
17 following new paragraphs:

18 “(11) evaluate the use of virtual private net-
19 works and direct-to-cell satellite technologies by civil
20 society and internationally recognized human rights
21 activists in Iran and develop strategies for increasing
22 the accessibility of such networks and technologies;

23 “(12) work with the Department of the Treas-
24 ury and the Department of Commerce to ensure en-
25 forcement of sanctions does not impede companies

1 providing to Iranian civilians the technology and
2 other tools necessary to access the open internet;

3 “(13) assess the ability of the Iranian regime to
4 cut off all access to the internet and develop a strat-
5 egy to circumvent internet blackouts for Iranian civil
6 society;”; and

7 (D) by adding at the end of the following
8 new subsection:

9 “(b) UPDATES.—The Secretary of State, in consulta-
10 tion with the Secretary of the Treasury, the Secretary of
11 Commerce, and the heads of other Federal departments
12 and agencies as appropriate, shall review the strategy
13 under subsection (a) on an ongoing basis and update the
14 strategy as appropriate, taking into account the results
15 of such review.”.

16 (2) SUBMISSION OF FIRST UPDATES.—

17 (A) SUBMISSION.—Not later than 120
18 days after the date of the enactment of this
19 Act, the Secretary of State shall—

20 (i) review and update the strategy
21 pursuant to section 414(b) of the Iran
22 Threat Reduction and Syria Human
23 Rights Act of 2012 (22 U.S.C. 8754), as
24 added by paragraph (1); and

1 (ii) submit such updated strategy to
2 the Committee on Foreign Relations of the
3 Senate and the Committee on Foreign Af-
4 fairs of the House of Representatives.

5 (B) FORM.—The strategy under subpara-
6 graph (A) shall be submitted in an unclassified
7 form, but may include a classified annex.

8 **SEC. 4. INTERNET FREEDOM AND CENSORSHIP CIR-**
9 **CUMVENTION.**

10 (a) INTERNET FREEDOM REPORT.—

11 (1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 120 days
12 after the date of the enactment of the Act, the Sec-
13 retary of State, in consultation with the Federal
14 Communications Commission and the Department of
15 the Treasury, shall prepare and submit to the Com-
16 mittee on Foreign Relations of the Senate and the
17 Committee on Foreign Affairs of the House of Rep-
18 resentatives a report that updates and supplements
19 the report required under section 5124 of the Na-
20 tional Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year
21 2025 (Public Law 118–159).

22 (2) ADDITIONAL MATTERS TO BE INCLUDED.—
23 Updates to the strategy required in section 5124 of
24 the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal

1 Year 2025 (22 U.S.C. 8754a) shall also include the
2 following:

3 (A) An assessment of the feasibility of
4 using direct-to-cell wireless communications
5 technologies to expand internet access for the
6 people of Iran, including technical, regulatory,
7 and security considerations.

8 (B) An analysis of how drone-based plat-
9 forms, signal-jamming technologies, and related
10 countermeasures could impact the feasibility,
11 security, economics, and resilience of such di-
12 rect-to-cell wireless communications.

13 (C) A survey of terrestrial and non-terres-
14 trial telecommunications service providers cur-
15 rently active in Iran, including—

16 (i) whether such providers are state-
17 owned or state-controlled;

18 (ii) the extent of foreign participation
19 or investment in such providers;

20 (iii) the implications of such owner-
21 ship and control for communications free-
22 dom and censorship; and

23 (iv) any other relevant information to
24 assess the opportunities and risks associ-

1 ated with terrestrial and non-terrestrial
2 communications technologies in Iran.

3 (3) FORM.—The report required by paragraph
4 (1) shall be submitted in unclassified form, but may
5 include a classified annex.

6 (b) EXTENSION AND INCREASE OF AUTHORIZATION
7 FOR IRAN INTERNET FREEDOM GRANT PROGRAM.—Sec-
8 tion 5124(b)(5)(A) of the National Defense Authorization
9 Act for Fiscal Year 2025 (22 U.S.C. 8754a(b)(5)(A)) is
10 amended by inserting “and not less than \$20,000,000 for
11 each of fiscal years 2027 through 2030” after
12 “\$15,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2025 and 2026”.

13 (c) DEVELOPMENT OF INTERNET ACCESS TECH-
14 NOLOGIES.—

15 (1) IN GENERAL.—The Department of State, in
16 coordination with the Department of Defense, the
17 United States Agency for Global Media, and other
18 relevant Federal departments and agencies, shall
19 form a joint working group (referred to as the
20 “Working Group”) to support the development of
21 low-cost, easily scalable, and rapidly deployable tech-
22 nologies to counter internet shutdowns or limitations
23 on network access abroad, particularly those im-
24 posed by adversary countries, to enable populations
25 to overcome such restrictions.

1 (2) OBJECTIVES.—In carrying out the respon-
2 sibilities under subsection (a), the Working Group
3 shall prioritize the following objectives:

4 (A) Identifying and supporting the devel-
5 opment of technologies capable of overcoming
6 internet blackouts and network disruptions im-
7 posed by an adversary country and facilitating
8 internet and network access, including—

9 (i) low-earth orbit satellite internet in-
10 frastructure;

11 (ii) mesh networking solutions; and

12 (iii) portable and deployable commu-
13 nication systems.

14 (B) Virtual private networks (commonly
15 known as “VPNs”), including—

16 (i) collaborating with industry, aca-
17 demia, and relevant stakeholders to accel-
18 erate the research, development, and de-
19 ployment of such technologies;

20 (ii) conducting pilot programs and
21 field experiments to test the effectiveness
22 and scalability of developed solutions in
23 real-world settings; and

24 (iii) providing technical assistance and
25 resources to partner organizations, govern-

1 ments, and nongovernmental entities en-
2 gaged in efforts to expand internet access.

3 (C) Identifying and evaluating off-the-shelf
4 technologies that could be rapidly procured and
5 deployed to address internet access challenges
6 in targeted regions.

7 (3) COLLABORATION WITH THE FEDERAL AC-
8 QUISITION INSTITUTE.—The Working Group shall
9 collaborate with the Federal Acquisition Institute to
10 leverage expertise in acquisition processes and prac-
11 tices related to carrying out the objectives under
12 paragraph (2) with the aim of—

13 (A) integrating best practices in defense
14 acquisition into the research, development, and
15 deployment processes of technologies developed
16 by the Working Group to facilitate internet ac-
17 cess;

18 (B) ensuring that technologies developed
19 by the Working Group align with acquisition
20 priorities and strategies of the Department of
21 State and the Department of Defense;

22 (C) providing training and educational op-
23 portunities for the Working Group on acquisi-
24 tion principles, regulations, and procedures,

1 with a focus on technology development for
2 countering censorship and related restrictions;

3 (D) fostering dialogue and exchange of
4 knowledge between acquisition professionals and
5 innovation specialists to enhance the effective-
6 ness and efficiency of defense technology acqui-
7 sition related to internet access technologies;
8 and

9 (E) collaborating on the development of ac-
10 quisition strategies that prioritize the rapid ac-
11 quisition and deployment of technologies aimed
12 at countering censorship and restrictions on
13 internet access.

14 (4) REPORTING.—The Secretary of State, in co-
15 ordination with the Secretary of Defense and the
16 United States Agency for Global Media, shall submit
17 to the appropriate congressional committees an an-
18 nual report detailing the progress, challenges, and
19 outcomes of the efforts undertaken pursuant to this
20 section.

21 (5) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—
22 There is hereby authorized to be appropriated such
23 sums as may be necessary for each fiscal year 2027
24 through 2030 to carry out the activities described in
25 this subsection.

1 (6) APPROPRIATE CONGRESSIONAL COMMIT-
2 TEES DEFINED.—In this subsection, the term “ap-
3 propriate congressional committees” means—

4 (A) the Committee on Armed Services, the
5 Committee on Foreign Relations, and the Com-
6 mittee on Appropriations of the Senate; and

7 (B) the Committee on Armed Services, the
8 Committee on Foreign Affairs, and the Com-
9 mittee on Appropriations of the House of Rep-
10 resentatives.

11 **SEC. 5. IDENTIFICATION OF INDIVIDUALS SUPPORTING**
12 **HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS.**

13 (a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 120 days after re-
14 ceiving a written request from the chairman or ranking
15 member of any of the appropriate congressional commit-
16 tees regarding whether a foreign person has engaged in
17 the conduct described in subsection (b), the President
18 shall—

19 (1) determine whether the foreign person has
20 engaged in such conduct; and

21 (2) submit to such chairman or ranking minor-
22 ity member a written justification detailing whether
23 the President imposed the sanctions described in
24 subsection (c) with respect to such person.

1 (b) CONDUCT DESCRIBED.—The conduct described
2 in this subsection is knowingly providing material support
3 for the Iranian regime’s abuses of internationally recog-
4 nized human rights, censorship, or repression of the Ira-
5 nian people, including—

6 (1) selling, supplying, or transferring censorship
7 technology, surveillance tools, or internet shutdown
8 capabilities;

9 (2) any conduct sanctionable under part 562 of
10 title 31, Code of Federal Regulations (Iranian
11 Human Rights Abuses Sanctions Regulations); or

12 (3) any conduct sanctionable under the Global
13 Magnitsky Human Rights Accountability Act (22
14 U.S.C. 10101 et seq.).

15 (c) APPROPRIATE CONGRESSIONAL COMMITTEES DE-
16 FINED.—In this section, the term “appropriate congres-
17 sional committees” means—

18 (1) the Committee on Foreign Relations, the
19 Committee on Armed Services, and the Select Com-
20 mittee on Intelligence of the Senate; and

21 (2) the Committee on Foreign Affairs, the
22 Committee on Armed Services, and the Permanent
23 Select Committee on Intelligence of the House of
24 Representatives.

1 **SEC. 6. STRATEGY ON IRAN BROADCASTING AND HUMAN**
2 **RIGHTS ASSISTANCE.**

3 (a) STRATEGY REQUIRED.—

4 (1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 120 days
5 after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Sec-
6 retary of State, in coordination with the Chief Exec-
7 utive Officer of the United States Agency for Global
8 Media, shall submit to the appropriate congressional
9 committees a strategy to expand and enhance
10 United States and international broadcasting efforts
11 and United States programs to support the protec-
12 tion and promotion of internationally recognized
13 human rights in Iran.

14 (2) ELEMENTS OF THE STRATEGY.—The strat-
15 egy required under subsection (a) shall include—

16 (A) a comprehensive review and assess-
17 ment of current United States Government and
18 international broadcasting efforts targeted at
19 Iran, including Voice of America Persian Serv-
20 ice, Radio Farda, and other relevant programs,
21 including their reach, effectiveness, and
22 vulnerabilities to Iranian regime censorship, as
23 well as United States Government efforts to
24 support internationally recognized human rights
25 and democratic civil society, including efforts to

1 assist in the credible documentation of abuses
2 of internationally recognized human rights;

3 (B) specific plans and initiatives to ensure
4 the Iranian people have reliable access to accu-
5 rate, uncensored, and unbiased news coverage,
6 including through satellite broadcasting, digital
7 circumvention tools, shortwave radio, and
8 emerging technologies;

9 (C) programs to support independent Ira-
10 nian journalists, media outlets, and citizen jour-
11 nalis, including grants for equipment, train-
12 ing, secure communication platforms, and ca-
13 pacity-building for Persian and other local lan-
14 guage media;

15 (D) programs to support and train Iranian
16 civil society;

17 (E) coordination mechanisms with inter-
18 national partners, the private sector, and dias-
19 pora communities to amplify credible inde-
20 pendent media;

21 (F) annual performance metrics and
22 benchmarks for audience reach, content impact,
23 and program outcomes; and

24 (G) a multi-year budget and resource re-
25 quirements plan to implement the strategy.

1 (3) FORM.—The strategy required in subsection
2 (a) shall be transmitted in an unclassified form and
3 may contain a classified annex.

4 (b) GAO REPORT ON NEAR EAST REGIONAL DEMOC-
5 RACY (NERD) EXPENDITURES.—

6 (1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 180 days
7 after the date of the enactment of this Act, the
8 Comptroller General of the United States shall sub-
9 mit to the appropriate congressional committees a
10 report examining Federal expenditures under the
11 Near East Regional Democracy (NERD) account
12 over fiscal years 2024 and 2025.

13 (2) MATTERS INCLUDED.—The report shall in-
14 clude—

15 (A) a detailed accounting of all NERD
16 funds obligated and expended for Iran-related
17 programs, including broadcasting, media sup-
18 port, civil society assistance, and human rights
19 initiatives;

20 (B) an assessment of the processes used
21 for grant allocation, contractor oversight, vet-
22 ting of recipients, and measuring program out-
23 comes;

24 (C) an evaluation of the effectiveness of
25 such programs in advancing United States pol-

1 (1) to deliver remote or in-person cybersecurity
2 training to journalists, defenders of internationally
3 recognized human rights, and civil-society actors in
4 Iran;

5 (2) to furnish vetted open-source or commer-
6 cially available digital-safety tools, including VPN
7 services and end-to-end encrypted messaging appli-
8 cations; and

9 (3) to provide multilingual educational mate-
10 rials that warn Iranian users about regime-con-
11 trolled applications and phishing campaigns.

12 (b) REPORTING AND EVALUATION.—

13 (1) QUARTERLY METRICS.—The Secretary of
14 State shall track and, on a quarterly basis, make
15 available to the Committee on Foreign Relations of
16 the Senate and the Committee on Foreign Affairs of
17 the House of Representatives aggregate metrics on
18 the number of trainees, incident-response cases, and
19 unique users of supported digital safety tools.

20 (2) INDEPENDENT EVALUATION.—Not later
21 than 3 years after the date of the enactment of this
22 Act, the Comptroller General of the United States
23 shall submit to the appropriate congressional com-
24 mittees an evaluation of the effectiveness of the pro-
25 gram carried out under this section.

1 (c) SAVINGS CLAUSE.—Nothing in this section may
2 be construed to supersede or limit existing authority under
3 section 404 of the Iran Threat Reduction and Syria
4 Human Rights Act of 2012 (22 U.S.C. 8754) or any other
5 provision of law related to internet freedom programming
6 in Iran.

7 (d) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There is
8 hereby authorized to be appropriated such sums as may
9 be necessary for each of fiscal years 2027 through 2030
10 to carry out the activities described in this section.

11 **SEC. 8. RULE OF CONSTRUCTION.**

12 Nothing in this Act may be construed as authorizing
13 the use of military force.

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