



Girls' Leadership, Engagement, Agency and Development Act (LEAD Act) (H.R.6626/ S. 2766)

The Problem: Globally, **about 132,000,000 adolescent girls** between the ages of 6 and 17 **are not enrolled in school**. Moreover, **women are largely underrepresented at all levels of public sector decision-making**. Promoting adolescent girls and women's education and pathway to political leadership will decrease the likelihood of child marriages, violence against women and promote the creation and maintenance of democratic societies.

- Only **24.5 percent** of all national parliamentarians are women leaders.
- **Women's political participation promotes democracy** by providing greater responsiveness to citizen needs and cooperation between party and ethnic lines.
- Research indicates that including women in the early stages of peace negotiations **decreases corruption, enhances stability and promotes higher living standards** in sectors like education and healthcare.
- For **each year of continued secondary education**, the likelihood of marrying before the age of 18 among adolescent girls will decrease by 5 percent.

The Solution: The bipartisan Girls LEAD Act will implement the following measures to **increase adolescent girls' participation in democracy, human rights and governance** in the following ways:

- Establish a specific implementation plan to **identify and address barriers to girls' and womens' civil engagement and political participation** in U.S. foreign assistance initiatives.
- Support **girl-led and girl-focused civil society organizations** with funding and technical assistance.
- Ensure that all foreign programs **engage participants under the age of 18**, and integrate metrics, benchmarks and monitoring capabilities to ensure accountability and effectiveness.

Supporters: The Girls LEAD Act was introduced by Sen. Benjamin Cardin (D-MD) and has received bipartisan support from Sen. Rob Portman (R-OH), Sen. Elizabeth Warren (D-MA), Sen. Shelley Moore Capito (R-WV), Sen. Christopher Coons (D-DE), Sen. Dan Sullivan (R-AK) and Sen. Jeff Merkley (D-OR).