118th CONGRESS  
1st SESSION  

H. R. ____

To require a report on sanctions under the Robert Levinson Hostage Recovery and Hostage-Taking Accountability Act, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on ____________________________

A BILL

To require a report on sanctions under the Robert Levinson Hostage Recovery and Hostage-Taking Accountability Act, and for other purposes.

1 Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

2 SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

3 This Act may be cited as the “No Paydays for Hostage-Takers Act”.

4 SEC. 2. FINDINGS.

5 Congress finds the following:
(1) The Islamic Republic of Iran has a long history of hostage-taking and wrongful detention of United States nationals, including its illegal detention of 52 American diplomats from 1979 to 1981.

(2) The Robert Levinson Hostage Recovery and Hostage-Taking Accountability Act (22 U.S.C. 1741 et seq.), named in honor of Robert Levinson, the longest-held hostage in United States history who is presumed to have been killed by the regime while in Iranian custody, authorizes sanctions with respect to foreign persons who are responsible for or complicit in hostage-taking or unlawful or wrongful detention of United States nationals abroad.

SEC. 3. STATEMENT OF POLICY.

It shall be the policy of the United States to undertake additional actions and impose strict penalties to deter the Government of Iran and other hostile governments and non-state actors from hostage-taking or wrongfully detaining United States nationals.

SEC. 4. REPORT AND CERTIFICATION ON RESTRICTED IRANIAN FUNDS RELEASED TO QATAR.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 90 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, and every 180 days thereafter for 6 years, the President shall submit to the Committee on Foreign Affairs and the Committee on Fi-
nancial Services of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Foreign Relations and the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs of the Senate the following:

(1) A report on the $6,000,000,000 in funds transferred from restricted Iranian accounts in the Republic of South Korea to restricted accounts in Qatar on or after August 9, 2023.

(2) A certification as to whether credible evidence or intelligence exists that any of the funds transferred have been used for any purpose other than humanitarian purposes.

(3) A certification as to whether credible evidence or intelligence exists that the funds transferred have enabled the Government of Iran to increase spending on defense, intelligence, or malign foreign activities.

(b) MATTERS TO BE INCLUDED.— The report required by subsection (a)(1) shall include the following:

(1) An itemized list of all transactions involving the use of funds transferred, including the value of such transactions, the parties to such transactions, the financial institutions involved, the goods purchased in each transaction, the destinations and end user of such goods, the date on which the United
States was notified of such transaction, and the date
the transaction occurred.

(2) The quantity of funds described in sub-
section (a)(1) in restricted accounts in Qatar at the
beginning and end of each reporting period.

(3) A thorough description of the process the
United States Government utilized during the re-
porting period to review transactions involving the
use of funds transferred in order to verify that such
transactions were humanitarian in nature.

SEC. 5. REVIEW AND DETERMINATION AND REPORTS ON

SANCTIONS UNDER THE ROBERT LEVINSON

HOSTAGE RECOVERY AND HOSTAGE-TAKING

ACCOUNTABILITY ACT.

(a) REVIEW AND DETERMINATION.—Not later than
180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, and
on an annual basis thereafter for 6 years, the President
shall—

(1) review all cases of the hostage-taking of a
United States national in Iran or at the direction of
the Government of Iran and all cases of the unlawful
or wrongful detention of a United States national in
Iran or at the direction of the Government of Iran
that have occurred during the preceding 10-year pe-
period; and
make a determination as to whether any foreign person, based on credible evidence—
  (A) is responsible for or complicit in, or responsible for ordering, controlling, or otherwise directing, the hostage-taking of the United States national or the unlawful or wrongful detention of the United States national; or
  (B) knowingly provides financial, material, or technological support for, or goods or services in support of, an activity described in subparagraph (A).

(b) REPORTS.—Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, and on an annual basis thereafter for 6 years, the President shall submit to the appropriate congressional committees a report that—
  (1) identifies all foreign persons with respect to which the President has made a determination under subsection (a)(2); and
  (2) with respect to each such foreign person—
    (A) states whether sanctions have been imposed under section 306 of the Robert Levinson Hostage Recovery and Hostage-Taking Accountability Act (22 U.S.C. 1741d) or will be imposed within 30 days of the date of the submission of the report; and
(B) for whom sanctions have not been imposed or will not be imposed under section 306 of such Act, provides a description of the specific authority under which otherwise applicable sanctions are being waived, have otherwise been determined not to apply, or are not being imposed and a complete justification of the decision to waive or otherwise not apply the sanctions authorized by such sanctions programs and authorities.

SEC. 6. REQUIREMENT TO LIMIT TRAVEL OF IRANIAN DIPLOMATS AT THE UNITED NATIONS.

(a) FINDINGS.—Congress finds the following:

(1) United States visa restrictions on sanctioned individuals often contain exceptions for activities in order to permit the United States to comply with the Agreement regarding the headquarters of the United Nations signed at Lake Success June 26, 1947, and entered into force November 21, 1947, between the United Nations and the United States.

(2) Section 6 of Public Law 80–357 (commonly known as the “United Nations Headquarters Agreement Act”) provides “Nothing in the agreement shall be construed as in any way diminishing,
abridging, or weakening the right of the United States to safeguard its own security.

(3) Congress has directed the President to use the President's authority, including the authorities contained in section 6 of Public Law 80–357, to deny any individual's admission to the United States as a representative to the United Nations if the President determines that such individual has been found to have been engaged in espionage activities or a terrorist activity directed against the United States or its allies and may pose a threat to United States national security interests.

(b) SENSE OF CONGRESS.—It is the sense of Congress that Iran's longstanding hostage-taking and wrongful detention of United States nationals, assassination plots against United States nationals outside and within the United States, and intelligence activities are a security or terrorist threat to the United States and United States interests and shall be a primary consideration in limiting travel of Iranian diplomats seeking admission to the United States for United Nations activities and their family members.

(c) DENIAL OF VISAS.—Section 407(a)(1) of the Foreign Relations Authorization Act, Fiscal Years 1990 and 1991 (8 U.S.C. 1102 note) is amended—
(1) by striking "(1)" and inserting "(1)(A)";
(2) by striking "and" at the end and inserting "or"; and
(3) by adding further at the end the following:
"(B) has been sanctioned pursuant to Executive Order 13224 (66 Fed. Reg. 49079; relating to blocking property and prohibiting transactions with persons who commit, threaten to commit, or support terrorism) or Executive Order 13382 (70 Fed. Reg. 38567; relating to blocking property of weapons of mass destruction proliferators and their supporters) as of the date of the enactment of the No Paydays for Hostage-Takers Act; and"
(d) REPORT.—Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, and annually thereafter for 6 years, the President shall submit to the appropriate congressional committees a report on whether the President has taken action to restrict the travel of Iranian diplomats seeking admission to the United States for United Nations activities and their family members and identifying each such instance in which visas were denied or travel was restricted.
SEC. 7. REPORT ON BLOCKED IRANIAN ASSETS.
Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, and annually thereafter for 6 years, the
President shall submit to the appropriate congressional committees a report that includes the following:

(1) An itemized list of any identifiable assets with a valuation of more than $10,000 belonging to Iranian individuals and entities that are or have been blocked or otherwise frozen pursuant to any sanctions program under any jurisdiction globally, in the prior 2 years.

(2) Any changes to the status of such assets, including unblocking, unfreezing, or transferring such assets, in the prior 2 years.

(3) With respect to any changes identified in paragraph (2), whether the United States Government took any action, including waiving of sanctions, that related to such unblocking or unfreezing, and a justification for any such United States actions.

SEC. 8. REPORT ON INTERNATIONAL EFFORTS TO FREEZE AND SEIZE IRANIAN ASSETS.

(a) Sense of Congress.—It is the sense of Congress that the Secretary of State, the Secretary of the Treasury, and the Attorney General should, to the extent practicable—

(1) carry out a coordinated international effort to find, restrain, freeze, seize, and where appro-
appropriate, confiscate or forfeit the assets of those individuals and entities that have been sanctioned in connection with Iran's malign activities, including hostage-taking, wrongful detention, and human rights violations; and

(2) work with foreign governments—

(A) to share intelligence of financial investigations, as appropriate;

(B) to oversee the assets identified pursuant to paragraph (1); and

(C) to provide technical assistance to help governments establish the necessary legal framework to carry out asset forfeitures.

(b) REPORT.—Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, and annually thereafter for 6 years, the President shall submit to the appropriate congressional committees a report on actions described in subsection (a).

SEC. 9. DETERMINATION AND REPORT ON INVALIDATING UNITED STATES PASSPORTS FOR TRAVEL TO IRAN.

(a) FINDINGS.—Congress finds the following:

(1) The Secretary of State maintains authority to restrict the use of United States passports for travel to or use in a country or area which the Sec-
Secretary has determined is a country or area in which there is imminent danger to the public health or physical safety of United States travelers, in accordance with section 51.63 of title 22, Code of Federal Regulations.

(2) In 2017, the Secretary of State declared United States passports invalid for travel to, in, or through North Korea, unless specially validated for such travel, after United States citizen Otto Warmbier suffered grievous injuries in North Korean custody, which led to his death.

(3) The ban on use of United States passports for travel to North Korea was renewed in 2023.

(b) SENSE OF CONGRESS.—It is the sense of Congress that the Secretary of State should declare United States passports invalid for travel to, in, or through Iran due to the imminent danger to the public health and physical safety of United States travelers stemming from the threat of wrongful detention or being taken hostage by the Iranian regime.

(c) DETERMINATION AND REPORT.—Not later than 90 days after the date of enactment of this Act and annually thereafter for 6 years, the Secretary of State shall determine and report to the Committee on Foreign Affairs
of the House of Representatives and the Committee on
Foreign Relations of the Senate—

(1) whether the travel of United States persons
to Iran presents an imminent danger to the public
health or physical safety of United States travelers;
and

(2) whether the Secretary is exercising his au-
thority to declare United States passports invalid for
cravel to, in, or through Iran.

SEC. 10. STRATEGY TO DETER HOSTAGE-TAKING.

Not later than 180 days after the date of the enact-
ment of this Act, the President shall develop and submit
to Congress a strategy to deter and prevent wrongful de-
tention and hostage-taking by United States adversaries,
including identifying penalties for wrongful detention and
hostage-taking, identifying clear United States Govern-
ment policies barring the payment of ransom or trans-
actions that could be viewed as ransom, and detailing
plans to coordinate with United States allies and partners
on such strategy.

SEC. 11. DEFINITIONS.

In this Act:

(1) APPROPRIATE CONGRESSIONAL COMMIT-
TEES.—the term "appropriate congressional commit-
tees" means—
(A) the Committee on Foreign Affairs and
the Committee on the Judiciary of the House of
Representatives;

(B) the Committee on Foreign Relations
and the Committee on the Judiciary of the Sen-
ate; and

(2) FOREIGN PERSON.—The term "foreign per-
son"—

(A) means an individual or entity that is
not a United States person; and

(B) includes a foreign state (as such term
is defined in section 1603 of title 28, United
States Code).

(3) UNITED STATES NATIONAL.—The term
"United States national" has the meaning given that
term in section 307(2) of the Robert Levinson Hos-
tage Recovery and Hostage-Taking Accountability
Act (22 U.S.C. 1741e(2)).