

2002

Legislative Watch

Human Rights Brief

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LEGISLATIVE WATCH

Legislative Watch reports on pending U.S. legislation relevant to human rights and humanitarian law. This list is not meant to be comprehensive.

International Disability and Victims of Landmines, Civil Strife and Warfare Assistance Act of 2001, S. 1777

Major Sponsor: Sen. Hillary Rodham Clinton (D-NY)

Status: Referred to Senate Committee on Foreign Relations on December 5, 2001.

Substance: This bill provides federal assistance to disabled persons and victims of civil strife and warfare in foreign countries. The bill lists a number of programs that may be implemented, including training for medical professionals and physical, psychological, and social rehabilitation programs. Technical support will be channeled through non-governmental organizations or local governments. Additionally, the bill authorizes the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to conduct research on trauma and physical, psychological, and social rehabilitation to improve access to appropriate healthcare.

Afghan Women and Children Relief Act of 2001, H.R. 3330

Major Sponsor: Rep. Deborah Pryce (R-OH)

Status: Referred to House Committee on November 16, 2001.

Substance: This bill provides educational and healthcare assistance for Afghan women and children who are in Afghanistan or are refugees in neighboring nations. Pursuant to this bill, the president is authorized to furnish assistance in a manner consistent with human rights norms and in collaboration with non-governmental organizations. The bill requires the secretary of state to report on the condition of Afghan women and children as well as a description of the activities carried out in accordance with this bill to the Senate and House Committees on Appropriations, the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, and the House Committee on International Relations.

Zimbabwe Democracy and Economic Recovery Act of 2001, S. 494

Major Sponsor: Sen. Bill Frist (R-TN)

Status: Became Public Law No. 107-99 on December 12, 2001.

Substance: This Act aims to facilitate

democratic change by supporting economic growth and the rule of law in Zimbabwe. The Act directs U.S. government agencies and international financial institutions to review the feasibility of providing bilateral and multilateral debt relief. The Act conditions this policy on presidential certification that the following criteria are met: (1) the rule of law in Zimbabwe is restored and human rights are respected; (2) free and fair presidential elections are held; (3) the government of Zimbabwe elaborates an equitable land reform program; (4) the government of Zimbabwe demonstrates a good faith effort to comply with the Lusaka Peace Accords; and (5) the Zimbabwean armed and police forces are regulated by a democratically elected civilian government. The Act authorizes U.S.\$6 million for the establishment of democracy and governance programs and U.S.\$20 million for the land reform initiative.

Employment Non-Discrimination Act of 2001, H.R. 2692

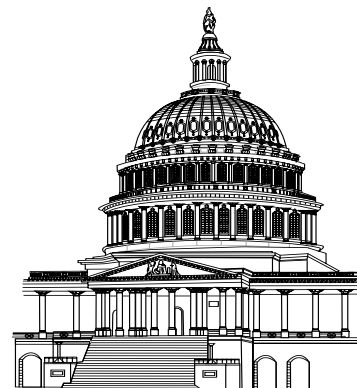
Major Sponsor: Rep. Christopher Shays (R-CT)

Status: Referred to House Subcommittee on the Constitution on November 2, 2001.

Substance: This Act prohibits employment discrimination based on sexual orientation and provides appropriate remedies for violations. The Act prohibits discrimination by employees, employment agencies, and labor unions, as well as discrimination relating to work training programs. Employers are prevented from discriminating through hiring practices, retaliation, or coercion. The Act prohibits quotas or preferential treatment, although religious institutions are exempt from these provisions. Individuals may invoke Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 in response to violations of this Act. The Equal Opportunity Employment Commission would be charged with enforcing the Employment Non-Discrimination Act.

Global Access to HIV/AIDS Prevention, Awareness, Education, and Treatment Act of 2001, H.R. 2069

Major Sponsor: Rep. Henry J. Hyde (R-IL)



Status: Referred to Senate Committee on December 12, 2001.

Substance: This bill amends the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 and is designed to help prevent the spread of HIV/AIDS by implementing an awareness, education, and prevention program. The programs enumerated in this bill provide medical care and distribute pharmaceuticals to those infected with HIV/AIDS. The bill stresses the need for a global approach to the problem by relying on the roles of governments, non-governmental organizations, and religious groups. This legislative initiative envisions an integrated approach to tackling infectious diseases, including malaria and tuberculosis. Specifically, the bill increases support for micro-enterprise programs, infrastructure, and stipulates that technical expertise is required for those who provide medical care and counseling. Care for orphans who have lost parents to HIV/AIDS will also be included in the aid package. 🌐

