

THE WOMEN, PEACE, AND SECURITY ACT OF 2012 (H.R. 6255 / S. 3477) – FACT SHEET

The Issue

In recent history, peace agreements have fallen apart at a startling rate, returning societies to war before they've wholly recovered from strife. In the 1990s, for instance, [nearly 50 percent](#) of peace deals didn't live to see their 5th anniversary. Research and experience are increasingly pointing to one major explanation as to why durable peace has proven so elusive: the failure to include a broad range of stakeholders, especially women, in peace processes. Indeed, in the last two decades alone, women were [fewer than 8 percent](#) of the participants in key peace negotiations and less than 3 percent of the signatories of the resulting accords—and only 16 percent of agreements during this period mention women at all.

The Bill

With the introduction of the Women, Peace, and Security Act of 2012 (WPS Act), the US Congress appears ready to do its part to move the United States toward an approach that will build lasting, inclusive security, not tenuous, exclusive agreements. The WPS Act recognizes the invaluable role women play in preventing, mediating, and resolving violent conflict and seeks to get them into the high-level negotiations, *jirgas*, and other fora where history-altering peace and security decisions are made.

If passed and signed into law, the Act would:

- require the secretary of state to work with her counterparts at the Pentagon and USAID to provide the Congress an annual report on women, peace, and security that gives an overview of how US taxpayer dollars are being spent to promote women's inclusion in decision-making and assesses the impact of such assistance;
- institute comprehensive training programs on the value of women's participation in such areas as conflict prevention for relevant diplomatic, defense, and development personnel; and
- encourage the United States to assist women mediators and negotiators by eliminating barriers to their equal and secure participation in peace processes and to support partner governments that demonstrate a commitment to recruiting and retaining women in leadership roles.

The Cosponsors

The WPS Act's champions include Reps. Russ Carnahan (D-MO), Howard Berman (D-CA), Jan Schakowsky (D-IL) and Niki Tsongas (D-MA), as well as Sens. Barbara Boxer (D-CA), Kay Bailey Hutchison (R-TX), Jeanne Shaheen (D-NH), and Olympia Snowe (R-ME). *Ask your representative and senators to cosponsor the Act! To find out whether or not they're already cosponsors, visit Thomas.gov and enter the bill number. Call the Capitol Switchboard at 202.224.3121 to be connected to their offices.*

The US National Action Plan and the Women, Peace, and Security Agenda

On December 19, 2011, President Obama signed an executive order to launch the first-ever [US National Action Plan on Women, Peace, and Security](#), making the United States one of more than 30 countries with a set of comprehensive, national-level policies to ensure women's participation and protection in times of war and peace. The US NAP builds upon the [May 2010 National Security Strategy](#), which found "... countries are more peaceful and prosperous when women are accorded full and equal rights and opportunity." The WPS Act primarily advances the US NAP's high-level objectives on National Integration and Institutionalization and Participation in Peace Processes and Decision-making.

Beginning with the unanimous adoption of UNSCR 1325 in 2000, the United Nations Security Council has passed, with US support, five resolutions on women, peace, and security, including SCRs 1820, 1888, 1889, and 1960. National action plans are a common tool to spur more effective implementation of these resolutions, particularly 1325. Some countries, including [Israel](#), have even passed legislation to ensure their laws better reflect the ideal of inclusion put forth by 1325.

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