

 S.L.C. J. Risch

118TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

S. _____

To establish a partnership with nations in the Western Hemisphere to promote economic competitiveness, democratic governance, and security, and for other purposes.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

Mr. RISCH (for himself and Mr. MENENDEZ) introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on _____

A BILL

To establish a partnership with nations in the Western Hemisphere to promote economic competitiveness, democratic governance, and security, 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 “Western Hemisphere
5 Partnership Act of 2023”.

1 **SEC. 2. UNITED STATES POLICY IN THE WESTERN HEMI-**
2 **SPHERE.**

3 It is the policy of the United States to promote eco-
4 nomic competitiveness, democratic governance, and secu-
5 rity in the Western Hemisphere by—

6 (1) encouraging stronger economic relations, re-
7 spect for property rights, the rule of law, and en-
8 forceable investment rules and labor and environ-
9 mental standards;

10 (2) advancing the principles and practices ex-
11 pressed in the Charter of the Organization of Amer-
12 ican States, the American Declaration on the Rights
13 and Duties of Man, and the Inter-American Demo-
14 cratic Charter; and

15 (3) enhancing the capacity and technical capa-
16 bilities of democratic partner nation government in-
17 stitutions, including civilian law enforcement, the ju-
18 diciary, attorneys general, and security forces.

19 **SEC. 3. PROMOTING SECURITY AND THE RULE OF LAW IN**
20 **THE WESTERN HEMISPHERE.**

21 (a) SENSE OF CONGRESS.—It is the sense of Con-
22 gress that the United States should strengthen security
23 cooperation with democratic partner nations in the West-
24 ern Hemisphere to promote a secure hemisphere and to
25 address the negative impacts of transnational criminal or-
26 ganizations and malign external state actors.

1 (b) COLLABORATIVE EFFORTS.—The Secretary of
2 State, in coordination with the heads of other relevant
3 Federal agencies, should support the improvement of secu-
4 rity conditions and the rule of law in the Western Hemi-
5 sphere through collaborative efforts with democratic part-
6 ners that—

7 (1) enhance the institutional capacity and tech-
8 nical capabilities of defense and security institutions
9 in democratic partner nations to conduct national or
10 regional security missions, including through regular
11 bilateral and multilateral engagements, foreign mili-
12 tary sales and financing, international military edu-
13 cation, and training programs, and other means;

14 (2) provide technical assistance and material
15 support (including, as appropriate, radars, vessels,
16 and communications equipment) to relevant security
17 forces to disrupt, degrade, and dismantle organiza-
18 tions involved in illicit narcotics trafficking,
19 transnational criminal activities, illicit mining, and
20 illegal, unreported, and unregulated fishing, and
21 other illicit activities;

22 (3) enhance the institutional capacity and tech-
23 nical capabilities of relevant civilian law enforce-
24 ment, attorneys general, and judicial institutions
25 to—

1 (A) strengthen the rule of law and trans-
2 parent governance; and

3 (B) improve regional cooperation to dis-
4 rupt, degrade, and dismantle transnational or-
5 ganized criminal networks and terrorist organi-
6 zations, including through training,
7 anticorruption initiatives, anti-money laun-
8 dering programs, and strengthening cyber capa-
9 bilities and resources;

10 (4) enhance port management and maritime se-
11 curity partnerships and airport management and
12 aviation security partnerships to disrupt, degrade,
13 and dismantle transnational criminal networks and
14 facilitate the legitimate flow of people, goods, and
15 services;

16 (5) strengthen cooperation to improve border
17 security across the Western Hemisphere, dismantle
18 human smuggling and trafficking networks, and in-
19 crease cooperation to demonstrably strengthen mi-
20 gration management systems;

21 (6) counter the malign influence of state and
22 non-state actors and misinformation and
23 disinformation campaigns;

24 (7) disrupt illicit domestic and transnational fi-
25 nancial networks;

1 (8) foster mechanisms for cooperation on emer-
2 gency preparedness and rapid recovery from natural
3 disasters, including by—

4 (A) supporting regional preparedness, re-
5 covery, and emergency management centers to
6 facilitate rapid response to survey and help
7 maintain planning on regional disaster antici-
8 pated needs and possible resources; and

9 (B) training disaster recovery officials on
10 latest techniques and lessons learned from
11 United States experiences; and

12 (9) foster regional mechanisms for early warn-
13 ing and response to pandemics in the Western
14 Hemisphere, including through—

15 (A) improved cooperation with and re-
16 search by the United States Centers for Disease
17 Control and Prevention through regional pan-
18 demic response centers;

19 (B) personnel exchanges for technology
20 transfer and skills development; and

21 (C) surveying and mapping of health net-
22 works to build local health capacity.

23 (c) LIMITATIONS ON USE OF TECHNOLOGIES.—
24 Operational technologies transferred pursuant to sub-
25 section (b) to partner governments for intelligence, de-

1 fense, or law enforcement purposes shall be used solely
2 for the purposes for which the technology was intended.
3 The United States shall take all necessary steps to ensure
4 that the use of such operational technologies is consistent
5 with United States law, including protections of freedom
6 of expression, freedom of movement, and freedom of asso-
7 ciation.

8 **SEC. 4. PROMOTING DIGITALIZATION AND CYBERSECURITY**
9 **IN THE WESTERN HEMISPHERE.**

10 (a) SENSE OF CONGRESS.—It is the sense of Con-
11 gress that the United States should support digitalization
12 and expand cybersecurity cooperation in the Western
13 Hemisphere to promote regional economic prosperity and
14 security.

15 (b) PROMOTION OF DIGITALIZATION AND CYBERSE-
16 CURITY.—The Secretary of State, in coordination with the
17 heads of other relevant Federal agencies, should promote
18 digitalization and cybersecurity in the Western Hemi-
19 sphere through collaborative efforts with democratic part-
20 ners that—

21 (1) promote digital connectivity and facilitate e-
22 commerce by expanding access to information and
23 communications technology (ICT) supply chains that
24 adhere to high-quality security and reliability stand-
25 ards, including—

1 (A) to open market access on a national
2 treatment, nondiscriminatory basis; and

3 (B) to strengthen the cybersecurity and
4 cyber resilience of partner countries;

5 (2) advance the provision of digital government
6 services (e-government) that, to the greatest extent
7 possible, promote transparency, lower business costs,
8 and expand citizens' access to public services and
9 public information; and

10 (3) develop robust cybersecurity partnerships
11 to—

12 (A) promote the inclusion of components
13 and architectures in information and commu-
14 nications technology (ICT) supply chains from
15 participants in initiatives that adhere to high-
16 quality security and reliability standards;

17 (B) share best practices to mitigate cyber
18 threats to critical infrastructure from ICT ar-
19 chitectures by technology providers with close
20 ties to, or that are susceptible to pressure from,
21 governments or security services without reli-
22 able legal checks on governmental powers;

23 (C) effectively respond to cybersecurity
24 threats, including state-sponsored threats; and

1 (D) to strengthen resilience against
2 cyberattacks and cybercrime.

3 **SEC. 5. PROMOTING ECONOMIC AND COMMERCIAL PART-**
4 **NERSHIPS IN THE WESTERN HEMISPHERE.**

5 (a) SENSE OF CONGRESS.—It is the sense of Con-
6 gress that the United States should enhance economic and
7 commercial ties with democratic partners to promote pros-
8 perity in the Western Hemisphere by modernizing and
9 strengthening trade capacity-building and trade facilita-
10 tion initiatives, encouraging market-based economic re-
11 forms, strengthening labor and environmental standards,
12 and encouraging transparency and adherence to the rule
13 of law in investment dealings.

14 (b) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of State, in coordi-
15 nation with the United States Trade Representative, the
16 Chief Executive Officer of the Development Finance Cor-
17 poration, and the heads of other relevant Federal agencies,
18 should support the improvement of economic conditions in
19 the Western Hemisphere through collaborative efforts with
20 democratic partners that—

21 (1) facilitate a more open, transparent, and
22 competitive environment for United States busi-
23 nesses and promote robust and comprehensive trade
24 capacity-building and trade facilitation by—

1 (A) reducing trade and nontariff barriers
2 between the countries in the region, establishing
3 a mechanism for pursuing Mutual Recognition
4 Agreements and Formalized Regulatory Co-
5 operation Agreements in priority sectors of the
6 economy;

7 (B) establishing a forum for discussing
8 and evaluating technical and other assistance
9 needs to help establish streamlined "single win-
10 dow" processes to facilitate movement of goods
11 and common customs arrangements and proce-
12 dures to lower costs of goods in transit and
13 speed to destination;

14 (C) building relationships and exchanges
15 between relevant regulatory bodies in the
16 United States and democratic partners in the
17 Western Hemisphere to promote best practices
18 and transparency in rulemaking, implementa-
19 tion, and enforcement, and provide training and
20 assistance to help improve supply chain man-
21 agement in the Western Hemisphere;

22 (D) establishing regional fora for identi-
23 fying, raising, and addressing supply chain
24 management issues, including infrastructure

1 needs and strengthening of investment rules
2 and regulatory frameworks;

3 (E) establishing a dedicated program of
4 trade missions and reverse trade missions to in-
5 crease commercial contacts and ties between the
6 United States and Western Hemisphere partner
7 countries; and

8 (F) strengthening labor and environmental
9 standards in the region;

10 (2) establish frameworks or mechanisms to re-
11 view and address the long-term financial sustain-
12 ability and national security implications of foreign
13 investments in strategic sectors or services;

14 (3) establish competitive and transparent infra-
15 structure project selection and procurement pro-
16 cesses that promote transparency, open competition,
17 financial sustainability, and robust adherence to
18 global standards and norms; and

19 (4) advance robust and comprehensive energy
20 production and integration, including through a
21 more open, transparent, and competitive environ-
22 ment for United States companies competing in the
23 Western Hemisphere, including by—

24 (A) facilitating further development of in-
25 tegrated regional energy markets;

1 (B) improving management of grids, in-
2 cluding technical capability to ensure the
3 functionality, safe and responsible management,
4 and quality of service of electricity providers,
5 carriers, and management and distribution sys-
6 tems;

7 (C) facilitating private sector-led develop-
8 ment of reliable and affordable power genera-
9 tion capacity;

10 (D) establishing a process for surveying
11 grid capacity and management focused on iden-
12 tifying electricity service efficiencies and estab-
13 lishing cooperative mechanisms for providing
14 technical assistance for—

15 (i) grid management, power pricing,
16 and tariff issues;

17 (ii) establishing and maintaining ap-
18 propriate regulatory best practices; and

19 (iii) proposals to establish regional
20 power grids for the purpose of promoting
21 the sale of excess supply to consumers
22 across borders;

23 (E) assessing the viability and effectiveness
24 of decentralizing power production and trans-
25 mission and building micro-grid power networks

1 to improve, when feasible, access to electricity,
2 particularly in rural and underserved commu-
3 nities where centralized power grid connections
4 may not be feasible in the short to medium
5 term; and

6 (F) exploring opportunities to partner with
7 the private sector and multilateral institutions,
8 such as the World Bank and the Inter-Amer-
9 ican Development Bank, to promote universal
10 access to reliable and affordable electricity in
11 the Western Hemisphere.

12 **SEC. 6. PROMOTING TRANSPARENCY AND DEMOCRATIC**
13 **GOVERNANCE IN THE WESTERN HEMI-**
14 **SPHERE.**

15 (a) **SENSE OF CONGRESS.**—It is the sense of Con-
16 gress that the United States should support efforts to
17 strengthen the capacity of democratic institutions and
18 processes in the Western Hemisphere to promote a more
19 transparent, democratic, and prosperous region.

20 (b) **IN GENERAL.**—The Secretary of State, in coordi-
21 nation with the Administrator of the United States Agen-
22 cy for International Development and heads of other rel-
23 evant Federal agencies, should support transparent, ac-
24 countable, and democratic governance in the Western

1 Hemisphere through collaborative efforts with democratic
2 partners that—

3 (1) strengthen the capacity of national electoral
4 institutions to ensure free, fair, and transparent
5 electoral processes, including through pre-election
6 assessment missions, technical assistance, and inde-
7 pendent local and international election monitoring
8 and observation missions;

9 (2) enhance the capabilities of democratically
10 elected national legislatures, parliamentary bodies,
11 and autonomous regulatory institutions to conduct
12 oversight;

13 (3) strengthen the capacity of subnational gov-
14 ernment institutions to govern in a transparent, ac-
15 countable, and democratic manner, including
16 through training and technical assistance;

17 (4) combat corruption at local and national lev-
18 els, including through trainings, cooperation agree-
19 ments, and bilateral or multilateral anticorruption
20 mechanisms that strengthen attorneys general and
21 prosecutors' offices; and

22 (5) strengthen the capacity of civil society to
23 conduct oversight of government institutions, build
24 the capacity of independent professional journalism,
25 facilitate substantive dialogue with government and

1 the private sector to generate issue-based policies,
2 and mobilize local resources to carry out such activi-
3 ties.

4 **SEC. 7. WESTERN HEMISPHERE DEFINED.**

5 In this Act, the term "Western Hemisphere" does not
6 include Cuba, Nicaragua, or Venezuela, except for pur-
7 poses of section 6.