

118TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

S. _____

To establish the position of Special Envoy to the Pacific Islands Forum.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

Mr. KENNEDY (for himself, Mr. SCHATZ, Mr. HAGERTY, Mr. VAN HOLLEN, Mr. SCOTT of Florida, Mrs. SHAHEEN, Mrs. BLACKBURN, Mr. KAINÉ, Mr. CASSIDY, Ms. DUCKWORTH, Mr. CARDIN, and Mr. PETERS) introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on _____

A BILL

To establish the position of Special Envoy to the Pacific Islands Forum.

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 “U.S. and Pacific Is-

5 lands Forum Partnership Act”.

6 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

7 Congress finds the following:

8 (1) The Pacific Islands Forum (referred to in

9 this Act as “PIF”) was established in 1971.

1 (2) PIF is committed to accelerating economic
2 growth, social progress, cultural development, and
3 regional peace and stability.

4 (3) The United States is committed to a free
5 and open Indo-Pacific and to peace, security, and
6 prosperity in the region.

7 (4) The United States seeks to maintain and
8 further develop a constructive and cordial relation-
9 ship with PIF and its member nations, including the
10 Freely Associated States (the Marshall Islands, Mi-
11 cronesia, and Palau), which have special economic
12 and security ties with the United States.

13 (5) The United States seeks to contribute to re-
14 gional stability in the Pacific region through assist-
15 ance efforts to combat illegal fishing, enhance mari-
16 time security, build resilient infrastructure, and pro-
17 mote sound, just, and responsive governance within
18 the Pacific region to empower citizens, help combat
19 corruption, and strengthen nations' autonomy.

20 (6) The Smaller Island States of PIF (the Cook
21 Islands, the Federated States of Micronesia,
22 Kiribati, the Marshall Islands, Nauru, Niue, Palau,
23 and Tuvalu) are the most vulnerable of PIF coun-
24 tries.

1 (7) Increased United States diplomatic engage-
2 ment and developmental assistance can help alleviate
3 the vulnerabilities linked to the small size of the
4 Smaller Island States, their lack of natural re-
5 sources, remoteness, and across the PIF region, by
6 addressing the range of development challenges that
7 limit their capacity to ensure democratic, economic,
8 and environmental resilience and long-term sustain-
9 able development.

10 (8) It is in the long-term interest of the United
11 States to maintain and expand a relationship with
12 PIF and its member nations.

13 **SEC. 3. SENSE OF CONGRESS.**

14 It is the sense of Congress that—

15 (1) the United States must increase its diplo-
16 matic activity and presence in the Pacific, particu-
17 larly among Pacific Island nations; and

18 (2) the Special Envoy to the Pacific Islands
19 Forum—

20 (A) should coordinate policies across the
21 Pacific region with like-minded democracies;
22 and

23 (B) should have a direct line to the Presi-
24 dent and the Secretary of State to communicate

1 regarding the unique and particular needs of
2 Pacific partner nations.

3 **SEC. 4. SPECIAL ENVOY TO THE PACIFIC ISLANDS FORUM.**

4 Section 1 of the State Department Basic Authorities
5 Act of 1956 (22 U.S.C. 2651a) is amended by adding at
6 the end the following:

7 “(n) SPECIAL ENVOY TO THE PACIFIC ISLANDS
8 FORUM.—

9 “(1) APPOINTMENT.—The President shall ap-
10 point, by and with the advice and consent of the
11 Senate, a qualified individual to serve as Special
12 Envoy to the Pacific Islands Forum (referred to in
13 this section as the ‘Special Envoy’). The Special
14 Envoy may not concurrently serve as a United
15 States Ambassador to an individual country.

16 “(2) DUTIES.—The Special Envoy shall—

17 “(A) represent the United States in its role
18 as dialogue partner to the Pacific Islands
19 Forum; and

20 “(B) carry out such other duties as the
21 President or the Secretary of State may pre-
22 scribe.”.

23 **SEC. 5. REPORT.**

24 Not later than 180 days after the date of the enact-
25 ment of this Act, the Secretary of State shall submit a

1 report to the Committee on Foreign Relations of the Sen-
2 ate and the Committee on Foreign Affairs of the House
3 of Representatives that describes how the Department of
4 State will increase its ability to recruit and retain highly-
5 qualified ambassadors, special envoys, and other senior
6 personnel in posts in Pacific island countries as the De-
7 partment expands its diplomatic footprint throughout the
8 region.