

Public Law 108–235
108th Congress

An Act

June 14, 2004
[S. 2092]

To address the participation of Taiwan in the World Health Organization.

22 USC 290 note. *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

SECTION 1. CONCERNING THE PARTICIPATION OF TAIWAN IN THE WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION.

(a) FINDINGS.—Congress makes the following findings:

(1) Good health is important to every citizen of the world and access to the highest standards of health information and services is necessary to improve the public health.

(2) Direct and unobstructed participation in international health cooperation forums and programs is beneficial for all parts of the world, especially today with the great potential for the cross-border spread of various infectious diseases such as the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV), tuberculosis, and malaria.

(3) Taiwan's population of 23,500,000 people is greater than that of $\frac{3}{4}$ of the member states already in the World Health Organization (WHO).

(4) Taiwan's achievements in the field of health are substantial, including—

(A) attaining—

(i) 1 of the highest life expectancy levels in Asia;

and

(ii) maternal and infant mortality rates comparable to those of western countries;

(B) eradicating such infectious diseases as cholera, smallpox, the plague, and polio; and

(C) providing children with hepatitis B vaccinations.

(5) The United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and its counterpart agencies in Taiwan have enjoyed close collaboration on a wide range of public health issues.

(6) In recent years Taiwan has expressed a willingness to assist financially and technically in international aid and health activities supported by the WHO.

(7) On January 14, 2001, an earthquake, registering between 7.6 and 7.9 on the Richter scale, struck El Salvador. In response, the Taiwanese Government sent 2 rescue teams, consisting of 90 individuals specializing in firefighting, medicine, and civil engineering. The Taiwanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs also donated \$200,000 in relief aid to the Salvadoran Government.

(8) The World Health Assembly has allowed observers to participate in the activities of the organization, including the

Palestine Liberation Organization in 1974, the Order of Malta, and the Holy See in the early 1950's.

(9) The United States, in the 1994 Taiwan Policy Review, declared its intention to support Taiwan's participation in appropriate international organizations.

(10) Public Law 106–137 required the Secretary of State to submit a report to Congress on efforts by the executive branch to support Taiwan's participation in international organizations, in particular the WHO.

(11) In light of all benefits that Taiwan's participation in the WHO can bring to the state of health not only in Taiwan, but also regionally and globally, Taiwan and its 23,500,000 people should have appropriate and meaningful participation in the WHO.

(12) On May 11, 2001, President Bush stated in a letter to Senator Murkowski that the United States "should find opportunities for Taiwan's voice to be heard in international organizations in order to make a contribution, even if membership is not possible", further stating that the administration "has focused on finding concrete ways for Taiwan to benefit and contribute to the WHO".

(13) In his speech made in the World Medical Association on May 14, 2002, Secretary of Health and Human Services Tommy Thompson announced "America's work for a healthy world cuts across political lines. That is why my government supports Taiwan's efforts to gain observership status at the World Health Assembly. We know this is a controversial issue, but we do not shrink from taking a public stance on it. The people of Taiwan deserve the same level of public health as citizens of every nation on earth, and we support them in their efforts to achieve it".

(14) The Government of the Republic of China on Taiwan, in response to an appeal from the United Nations and the United States for resources to control the spread of HIV/AIDS, donated \$1,000,000 to the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria in December 2002.

(15) In 2003, the outbreak of Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) caused 84 deaths in Taiwan.

(16) Avian influenza, commonly known as bird flu, has reemerged in Asia, with strains of the influenza reported by the People's Republic of China, Cambodia, Indonesia, Japan, Pakistan, South Korea, Taiwan, Thailand, Vietnam, and Laos.

(17) The SARS and avian influenza outbreaks illustrate that disease knows no boundaries and emphasize the importance of allowing all people access to the WHO.

(18) As the pace of globalization quickens and the spread of infectious disease accelerates, it is crucial that all people, including the people of Taiwan, be given the opportunity to participate in international health organizations such as the WHO.

(19) The Secretary of Health and Human Services acknowledged during the 2003 World Health Assembly meeting that "[t]he need for effective public health exists among all peoples".

(b) PLAN.—The Secretary of State is authorized to—

(1) initiate a United States plan to endorse and obtain observer status for Taiwan at the annual week-long summit

of the World Health Assembly each year in Geneva, Switzerland;

(2) instruct the United States delegation to the World Health Assembly in Geneva to implement that plan; and

(3) introduce a resolution in support of observer status for Taiwan at the summit of the World Health Assembly.

Deadline.

(c) REPORT CONCERNING OBSERVER STATUS FOR TAIWAN AT THE SUMMIT OF THE WORLD HEALTH ASSEMBLY.—Not later than 30 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, and not later than April 1 of each year thereafter, the Secretary of State shall submit a report to the Congress, in unclassified form, describing the United States plan to endorse and obtain observer status for Taiwan at the annual week-long summit of the World Health Assembly (WHA) held by the World Health Organization (WHO) in May of each year in Geneva, Switzerland. Each report shall include the following:

(1) An account of the efforts the Secretary of State has made, following the last meeting of the World Health Assembly, to encourage WHO member states to promote Taiwan's bid to obtain observer status.

(2) The steps the Secretary of State will take to endorse and obtain observer status at the next annual meeting of the World Health Assembly in Geneva, Switzerland.

Approved June 14, 2004.

LEGISLATIVE HISTORY—S. 2092 (H.R. 4019):

CONGRESSIONAL RECORD, Vol. 150 (2004):

May 6, considered and passed Senate.

May 20, considered and passed House.

WEEKLY COMPILATION OF PRESIDENTIAL DOCUMENTS, Vol. 40 (2004):

June 14, Presidential statement.