

AMENDMENT NO. _____ Calendar No. _____

Purpose: In the nature of a substitute.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES—119th Cong., 2d Sess.

S. 2236

To establish a comprehensive United States Government initiative to build the capacity of young leaders and entrepreneurs in Africa, and for other purposes.

Referred to the Committee on _____ and
ordered to be printed

Ordered to lie on the table and to be printed

AMENDMENT IN THE NATURE OF A SUBSTITUTE intended
to be proposed by Mr. VAN HOLLEN

Viz:

1 Strike all after the enacting clause and insert the fol-
2 lowing:

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLES.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Young African Leaders
5 Initiative Act of 2026” or the “YALI Act of 2026”.

6 **SEC. 2. SENSE OF CONGRESS.**

7 It is the sense of Congress that—

8 (1) the Young African Leaders Initiative,
9 launched in 2010, is a signature effort to invest in
10 the next generation of African leaders;

1 (2) Africa is a continent of strategic importance
2 and it is vital for the United States to support
3 strong and enduring partnerships with the next gen-
4 eration of African leaders;

5 (3) the United States Government should
6 prioritize investments to build the capacity of emerg-
7 ing young African leaders in sub-Saharan Africa, in-
8 cluding through efforts that—

9 (A) enhance leadership skills;

10 (B) encourage entrepreneurship;

11 (C) strengthen public administration and
12 the role of civil society;

13 (D) enhance peace and security in their re-
14 spective countries of origin and across Africa;
15 and

16 (E) connect young African leaders con-
17 tinently and globally across the private, civic,
18 and public sectors; and

19 (4) youth in Africa have a positive impact on
20 efforts to foster economic growth, improve public
21 sector transparency and governance, and counter ex-
22 tremism, and should be an area of focus for United
23 States outreach on the African continent.

1 **SEC. 3. YOUNG AFRICAN LEADERS INITIATIVE.**

2 (a) IN GENERAL.—There is established the Young
3 African Leaders Initiative (referred to in this section as
4 “YALI”), which shall be carried out by the Secretary of
5 State.

6 (b) PURPOSE.—YALI shall seek to build the capacity
7 of young African leaders in sub-Saharan Africa in the
8 areas of business, civic engagement, or public administra-
9 tion, including through efforts that—

10 (1) support young African leaders by offering
11 professional development, training, and networking
12 opportunities, particularly in the areas of leadership,
13 innovation, civic engagement, elections, internation-
14 ally recognized human rights, entrepreneurship, good
15 governance, peace and security, and public adminis-
16 tration; and

17 (2) provide increased economic and technical
18 assistance to young African leaders to promote eco-
19 nomic growth, strengthen ties between United States
20 and African businesses, build resilience to predatory
21 lending practices, and improve capacity in key eco-
22 nomic areas such as tendering, bidding, and contract
23 negotiations, budget management and oversight,
24 anti-corruption, and establishment of clear policy
25 and regulatory practices.

26 (c) FELLOWSHIPS.—

1 (1) IN GENERAL.—YALI shall support the par-
2 ticipation in the United States in the Mandela
3 Washington Fellowship for Young African Leaders
4 of fellows from Africa who—

5 (A) are between 25 and 35 years of age;

6 (B) have demonstrated strong capabilities
7 in entrepreneurship, innovation, public service,
8 and leadership; and

9 (C) have had a positive impact in their
10 communities, organizations, or institutions.

11 (2) OVERSIGHT.—The fellowships described in
12 paragraph (1) shall be overseen by the Secretary of
13 State through the Bureau of Educational and Cul-
14 tural Affairs.

15 (3) ELIGIBILITY.—The Secretary of State shall
16 establish and publish—

17 (A) eligibility criteria for participation as a
18 fellow under paragraph (1); and

19 (B) criteria for determining which eligible
20 applicants will be selected.

21 (d) RECIPROCAL EXCHANGES.—Subject to the ap-
22 proval of the Secretary of State, United States citizens
23 may—

1 (1) engage in reciprocal exchanges in connec-
2 tion with alumni of the fellowship described in sub-
3 section (c); and

4 (2) collaborate on projects with such fellowship
5 alumni.

6 (e) ACTIVITIES.—

7 (1) UNITED STATES-BASED ACTIVITIES.—The
8 Secretary of State, in coordination with the heads of
9 relevant Federal departments and agencies, shall
10 oversee all United States-based activities carried out
11 under YALI, including—

12 (A) the participation of Mandela Wash-
13 ington Fellows in a 6-week Leadership Institute
14 at a United States educational institution in
15 business, civic engagement, or public manage-
16 ment, including academic sessions, site visits,
17 professional networking opportunities, leader-
18 ship training, community service, and organized
19 cultural activities; and

20 (B) the participation by Mandela Wash-
21 ington fellows in an annual Mandela Wash-
22 ington Fellowship Summit, to provide such Fel-
23 lows the opportunity to meet with United States
24 leaders from the private, public, and nonprofit
25 sectors.

1 (2) IMPLEMENTATION.—The Secretary of
2 State, in coordination with the heads of other rel-
3 evant Federal departments and agencies, shall carry
4 out this subsection by seeking to partner with the
5 private sector—

6 (A) to pursue public-private partnerships;

7 (B) to leverage private sector expertise;

8 (C) to expand networking opportunities;

9 and

10 (D) to identify funding opportunities and
11 fellowship and employment opportunities for
12 YALI.

13 (f) IMPLEMENTATION PLAN.—Not later than 180
14 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Sec-
15 retary of State, in coordination with the heads of other
16 relevant Federal departments and agencies, shall submit
17 a plan to the appropriate congressional committees for im-
18 plementing YALI, including—

19 (1) a description of clearly defined program
20 goals, targets, and planned outcomes for each year
21 and for the duration of implementation of the pro-
22 gram;

23 (2) a strategy to monitor and evaluate the pro-
24 gram and progress made toward achieving such
25 goals, targets, and planned outcomes; and

1 (3) a strategy to ensure the program is pro-
2 moting United States foreign policy goals in Africa,
3 including ensuring that the program is clearly
4 branded, paired with robust public diplomacy efforts,
5 and incorporates participants from a variety of coun-
6 tries, including communities in Africa facing eco-
7 nomic distress, civil conflict, persecution, and other
8 challenges.

9 (g) REPORT.—Not later than 1 year after the date
10 of the enactment of this Act, and annually thereafter for
11 the following 4 years, the Secretary of State shall submit
12 to the appropriate congressional committees, and publish
13 in a publicly accessible, internet-based form, a report that
14 includes—

15 (1) a description of the progress made toward
16 achieving the goals, targets, and planned outcomes
17 referred to in subsection (f)(1), including an over-
18 view of the program implemented in the previous
19 year and an estimated number of beneficiaries;

20 (2) an assessment of how YALI is contributing
21 to and promoting United States-Africa relations,
22 particularly in areas of increased private sector in-
23 vestment, trade promotion, support to civil society,
24 improved public administration, promoting peace

1 and security, and fostering entrepreneurship and
2 youth empowerment; and

3 (3) recommendations for improvements or
4 changes to YALI and the implementation plan, if
5 any, that would improve their effectiveness during
6 subsequent years of YALI's implementation; and

7 (h) DEFINED TERM.—In this section, the term “ap-
8 propriate congressional committees” means—

9 (1) the Committee on Foreign Relations of the
10 Senate;

11 (2) the Committee on Appropriations of the
12 Senate;

13 (3) the Committee on Foreign Affairs of the
14 House of Representatives; and

15 (4) the Committee on Appropriations of the
16 House of Representatives.

17 (i) SUNSET.—This section shall cease to have effect
18 on the date that is 5 years after the date of the enactment
19 of this Act.