

109TH CONGRESS  
1ST SESSION

# H. R. 396

To provide assistance for early warning systems in foreign countries.

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## IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

JANUARY 26, 2005

Mr. MENENDEZ (for himself, Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas, Mr. LANTOS, Mr. TOWNS, Mr. HASTINGS of Florida, Mr. MCGOVERN, Mrs. MCCARTHY, Mr. OWENS, and Mr. RANGEL) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on International Relations

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## A BILL

To provide assistance for early warning systems in foreign countries.

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 “Early Warning And  
5       Rapid Notification Act of 2005”.

6       **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

7       Congress finds the following:

8               (1) Over 160,000 people were killed in the In-  
9       dian Ocean region as a result of the tsunamis that  
10       occurred on December 26, 2004.

1           (2) The Pacific Tsunami Warning Center in  
2 Hawaii detected the earthquake and knew of the po-  
3 tential threat of a tsunami in the Indian Ocean, but  
4 had no way to inform the countries in the most dan-  
5 ger.

6           (3) Even if such countries had the information  
7 about the tsunamis, some countries in the region  
8 would have had no way to warn people present on  
9 the coasts.

10          (4) With as little as 15 minutes advance notice,  
11 people could have moved to higher ground, with a  
12 potential huge reduction in the death toll.

13          (5) The United Nations reports that tens of  
14 thousands of people are killed and tens of billions of  
15 dollars of property are lost every year as a result of  
16 disasters, and states that early warning is one of the  
17 most effective ways to save lives and protect prop-  
18 erty.

19          (6) The World Conference on Disaster Reduc-  
20 tion announced the creation of the International  
21 Early Warning Program in January 2005, spon-  
22 sored by multiple United Nations organizations.

23          (7) The International Early Warning Program  
24 identified the following four elements of effective  
25 early warning systems:

1 (A) Prior knowledge of the risks faced by  
2 communities.

3 (B) Technical monitoring of hazards.

4 (C) Getting understandable warnings to  
5 those at risk.

6 (D) Knowledge and preparedness of how to  
7 act by those threatened by disasters.

8 (8) The United States, acting through the  
9 United States Agency for International Develop-  
10 ment, contributed to the establishment of a typhoon  
11 early-warning system in Bangladesh.

12 (9) The United States Agency for International  
13 Development's Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance  
14 has been funding the United Nations Development  
15 Program to help develop early warning communica-  
16 tions systems for floods and coastal storms in Viet-  
17 nam.

18 **SEC. 3. PURPOSE.**

19 The purpose of this Act is to establish a United  
20 States program to provide technological and financial sup-  
21 port to foreign countries for development of effective pub-  
22 lic warning systems for all-hazard events, and to strength-  
23 en the existing lines of communications between countries  
24 for the dissemination of data relating to disasters.

1 **SEC. 4. DEFINITIONS.**

2 In this Act:

3 (1) **ALL-HAZARD EVENT.**—The term “all-haz-  
4 ard event” means an emergency or disaster resulting  
5 from—

6 (A) a natural disaster; or

7 (B) an accident or intentional or negligent  
8 act that causes widespread damage or harm.

9 (2) **EFFECTIVE PUBLIC WARNING.**—The term  
10 “effective public warning” means practical, com-  
11 prehensible, and timely information given to all indi-  
12 viduals threatened by an all-hazard event sufficient  
13 to enable them to act to protect their safety and  
14 well-being in a timely manner.

15 **SEC. 5. DISSEMINATION OF DATA RELATING TO ALL-HAZ-**  
16 **ARD EVENTS BETWEEN AGENCIES AND**  
17 **COUNTRIES.**

18 (a) **STUDY.**—

19 (1) **IN GENERAL.**—The Secretary of State, act-  
20 ing through the Assistant Secretary for Oceans, En-  
21 vironment and Science and in consultation with the  
22 officials described in paragraph (2), shall conduct a  
23 study that—

24 (A) determines the extent to which depart-  
25 ments and agencies of the Government of the  
26 United States that receive or collect relevant

1 data regarding all-hazard events that could  
2 have an impact on lives or property have well  
3 established procedures for disseminating that  
4 data to other United States Government de-  
5 partments and agencies;

6 (B) evaluates the quality of communica-  
7 tions links between the United States and agen-  
8 cies in foreign countries that would be respon-  
9 sible for disseminating information about all-  
10 hazard events to their citizens; and

11 (C) examines the feasibility of the Depart-  
12 ment of State directly contacting foreign media  
13 organizations with information relating to all-  
14 hazard events if such information could be used  
15 to mitigate the effects of the hazards in foreign  
16 countries.

17 (2) OFFICIALS.—The officials referred to in  
18 paragraph (1) are the Administrator of the United  
19 States Agency for International Development, the  
20 Administrator of the National Oceanic and Atmos-  
21 pheric Administration, the Administrator of the Na-  
22 tional Aeronautics and Space Administration, the  
23 Director of the United States Geological Survey, and  
24 the Director of the National Science Foundation,

1 (b) REPORT.—Not later than 90 days after the date  
2 of enactment of this Act, the Secretary of State shall sub-  
3 mit to the Committees on International Relations and  
4 Science of the House of Representatives and the Commit-  
5 tees on Foreign Relations and Commerce, Science and  
6 Transportation of the Senate a report that contains—

7 (1) the results of the study conducted under  
8 subsection (a); and

9 (2) recommendations for improving any defi-  
10 ciencies in the lines of communication uncovered in  
11 the study conducted under subsection (a), where  
12 such deficiencies decrease the ability for the United  
13 States to disseminate all-hazard event warnings be-  
14 tween different departments and agencies of the  
15 United States Government, or between the United  
16 States Government and foreign governments.

17 **SEC. 6. ASSISTANCE FOR EFFECTIVE PUBLIC WARNING**  
18 **SYSTEMS IN FOREIGN COUNTRIES.**

19 (a) ASSISTANCE.—The President, acting through the  
20 Secretary of State and in coordination with the Adminis-  
21 trator of the United States Agency for International De-  
22 velopment, is authorized to provide assistance, including  
23 providing such assistance through the United Nations'  
24 International Early Warning Program or other inter-  
25 national organizations, for programs that enhance the ef-

1 fective public warning capability of foreign countries. The  
2 goals of such programs should be to—

3           (1) provide assistance to establish and support  
4           the communications infrastructure necessary to pro-  
5           vide effective public warnings;

6           (2) provide technical expertise and training to  
7           foreign countries about risk assessment procedures  
8           and the design and deployment of effective public  
9           warning systems; and

10           (3) establish public education campaigns that  
11           inform local populations about the proper ways to  
12           react to effective public warnings concerning all-haz-  
13           ard events so as to minimize the loss of life and  
14           property.

15           (b) RESEARCH.—The Secretary of State, in coopera-  
16           tion with the Secretary of Homeland Security, the Chair-  
17           man of the Federal Communications Commission, the Ad-  
18           ministrators of the National Telecommunications and In-  
19           formation Administration, and the heads of other appro-  
20           priate departments and agencies of the United States Gov-  
21           ernment, shall—

22           (1) ensure that the results of domestic research  
23           on effective public warning systems for all-hazard  
24           events are disseminated internationally, unless it is

1 determined that such dissemination would be detri-  
2 mental to the national security of the United States;

3 (2) broaden the scope of research programs of  
4 warning system research programs established under  
5 sections 7403 and 7404 of the Intelligence Reform  
6 and Terrorism Prevention Act of 2004 (Public Law  
7 108–458) to include a component to investigate how  
8 the results of those research programs could be ap-  
9 plied in other countries;

10 (3) study evolving technologies for emergency  
11 warning systems (such as broadcast media, wireline  
12 and wireless telephones, other wireless devices, in-  
13 stant messaging via computer, and electronic bul-  
14 letin boards) that could be used to provide effective  
15 public warning for all-hazard events in the United  
16 States and its territories and to international loca-  
17 tions; and

18 (4) work through the World Radio Conference  
19 and with other international forums and organiza-  
20 tions to study the role of satellites, wireless tech-  
21 nology, and radio frequency assignments in pro-  
22 viding emergency alert systems.

23 (c) COOPERATION.—In carrying out this section, the  
24 Secretary of State shall, to the maximum extent possible,

1 coordinate with the efforts of the United Nations' Inter-  
2 national Early Warning Program.

3 **SEC. 7. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.**

4 (a) IN GENERAL.—There are authorized to be appro-  
5 priated to the President to carry out this Act \$10,000,000  
6 for each of fiscal years 2006 through 2010.

7 (b) AVAILABILITY.—Amounts appropriated pursuant  
8 to the authorization of appropriations under subsection (a)  
9 are authorized to remain available until expended.

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