

To the office of U.S. Representative Ben Cline

Re: HR 2675 (119th Congress), Protecting Our Courts from Foreign Manipulation Act • Latest action (2026-06-15): Placed on the Union Calendar, Calendar No. 608.

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Federal Court Integrity Against Foreign Manipulation Act of 2025

The measure, as described from the official record: To prevent foreign governments, entities, or agents from manipulating or unduly influencing the decision-making processes of U.S. federal courts through bribery, coercion, or submission of fraudulent evidence.

THE PROPOSAL

This Act establishes a civil enforcement mechanism to protect the integrity of federal courts from foreign manipulation. It applies only to federal district courts, courts of appeals, and the Supreme Court of the United States. No provision of this Act shall be construed to limit or direct the independent judgment of any federal judge or to restrict the right of any person to petition a federal court for redress of grievances.

Section 2. Prohibition. It shall be unlawful for any foreign government, foreign political party, foreign corporation, or foreign agent (as defined by the Foreign Agents Registration Act) to knowingly: (a) bribe or attempt to bribe any federal judge, court officer, or juror; (b) threaten or coerce any federal judge, court officer, or juror with the intent to influence a judicial proceeding; or (c) submit or cause to be submitted false evidence or fabricated testimony in a federal court proceeding with the intent to mislead the court.

Section 3. Enforcement. The Attorney General may bring a civil action in federal district court against any person or entity that violates Section 2. The court may impose a civil penalty of up to \$1,000,000 per violation, order disgorgement of any benefit obtained, and issue injunctive relief to prevent further violations. No criminal penalties are authorized under this Act.

Section 4. Due Process. Any person or entity subject to an action under this Act shall be entitled to notice, an opportunity to be heard, and representation by counsel. The burden of proof shall be clear and convincing evidence.

Section 5. Reporting. The Attorney General shall submit an annual report to the Judiciary Committees of the House and Senate detailing investigations, enforcement actions, and any recommendations for further legislation. The report shall not include any information that would compromise ongoing investigations or national security.

Section 6. Sunset. This Act shall expire five years after its effective date, unless reauthorized by Congress.

Section 7. Effective Date. This Act shall take effect 90 days after enactment.

OPERATIVE PROVISIONS (VFA PROPOSAL)

Funding Source	Appropriated from the Department of Justice's existing Salaries and Expenses account, with a specific authorization of \$10 million per fiscal year for the duration of the Act.
Funding Amount	\$10 million annually
Sunset Years	5 years
Oversight Body	Attorney General, with annual reporting to the House and Senate Judiciary Committees
Enforcement Mechanism	Civil actions in federal district court brought by the Attorney General; penalties up to \$1,000,000 per violation, disgorgement, and injunctive relief; burden of proof clear and convincing evidence
Effective Date	90 days after enactment

CONSTITUTIONAL BASIS

- Article I, Section 8, Clause 18 (Necessary and Proper Clause to protect the integrity of federal courts under Article III)
- Article III, Section 1 (Judicial independence)
- Tenth Amendment (limitation to federal courts only)
- First Amendment (right to petition for redress of grievances preserved)
- Fifth Amendment (Due Process Clause – clear and convincing evidence standard, notice, and hearing)

Concerns with the measure as written:

- Original bill may have imposed restrictions on litigants' or courts' conduct that could infringe on Article III judicial independence.
 - Original bill may have extended to state courts, violating the Tenth Amendment and state sovereignty.
 - Original bill may have chilled the right to petition for redress of grievances under the First Amendment by overly broad definitions of foreign influence.
 - Original bill may have lacked due process protections for parties accused of foreign manipulation, violating the Fifth Amendment.
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WHY BOTH SIDES CAN BACK IT (VFA'S ASSESSMENT)

Democratic priorities honored: protects judicial independence and due process rights, avoids criminalizing conduct that could chill legitimate petitioning, and includes robust oversight and reporting. Republican priorities honored: narrowly targets foreign actors (not U.S. citizens or domestic entities), applies only to federal courts (respects state sovereignty under the Tenth Amendment), includes a sunset clause to limit federal overreach, and uses civil rather than criminal penalties to avoid excessive government power.

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