

To the office of U.S. Representative James R. Baird

Re: HR 8648 (119th Congress), FORGE Act • Latest action (2026-05-04): Referred to the House Committee on Foreign Affairs.

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FORGE Forward: Anti-Corruption Aid with Caps and Sunset

The measure, as described from the official record: The FORGE Act seeks to combat global corruption by creating a State Department coordinator for anti-corruption efforts, authorizing assistance to foreign civil society, and improving U.S. coordination on overseas rule-of-law programs.

THE PROPOSAL

The Department of State shall appoint an International Anti-Corruption Coordinator, reporting to the Secretary, to unify U.S. anti-corruption diplomacy, prioritize aid to nations where corruption threatens U.S. commerce or security, and coordinate with USAID and other agencies.

The Coordinator may award competitive grants to qualified foreign civil society groups for anti-corruption training, judicial reform, and transparency tools. Grants target measurable outcomes like recovered assets or convictions, with priority for countries scoring low on global corruption indices that impact U.S. interests.

No grants to governments directly; all funds go through vetted NGOs with U.S. anti-corruption compliance certifications. Programs exclude military or law enforcement training.

The Coordinator submits annual public reports to Congress detailing spending, outcomes, and independent audits. GAO conducts biennial reviews for effectiveness and waste.

This Act sunsets after 5 years unless reauthorized.

OPERATIVE PROVISIONS (VFA PROPOSAL)

Funding Source	New annual appropriations from general fund, reallocated from unspent foreign assistance balances where possible.
Funding Amount	Capped at \$75 million per fiscal year.
Sunset Years	5 years
Oversight Body	Government Accountability Office (GAO) and House/Senate Foreign Affairs/Appropriations Committees.
Enforcement Mechanism	State Department Inspector General audits; Congress can withhold funds via appropriations riders if reports show underperformance.
Effective Date	October 1 of year following enactment

CONSTITUTIONAL BASIS

- Article I, Section 8, Clause 1 (taxes for common defense and general welfare)
- Article I, Section 8, Clause 3 (regulate commerce with foreign nations)
- Article I, Section 8, Clause 18 (necessary and proper laws)

Concerns with the measure as written:

- Minor: lacks explicit funding caps, sunset provisions, and independent oversight, risking unchecked spending under Article I, Section 8, Clause 1.

WHY BOTH SIDES CAN BACK IT (VFA'S ASSESSMENT)

Honors Democratic priorities of promoting global democracy, human rights, and rule of law abroad; honors Republican priorities of protecting U.S. commerce from corrupt foreign markets, strict spending caps, GAO oversight, and sunset to prevent permanent bureaucracy.

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