

.....  
(Original Signature of Member)

119TH CONGRESS  
1ST SESSION

**H. R.** \_\_\_\_\_

To authorize the establishment of a Regional China Officer Program Unit in the Department of State to monitor and assess the global presence of the People's Republic of China and to help United States diplomatic and consular posts abroad address its malign influence and activities, and for other purposes.

\_\_\_\_\_  
**IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

Mr. MEEKS introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee  
on \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
**A BILL**

To authorize the establishment of a Regional China Officer Program Unit in the Department of State to monitor and assess the global presence of the People's Republic of China and to help United States diplomatic and consular posts abroad address its malign influence and activities, and for other purposes.

1       *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*  
2       *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

1   **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

2           This Act may be cited as the “Regional China Officer  
3   Authorization Act”.

4   **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

5           Congress finds the following:

6           (1) The Department of State started the Re-  
7           gional China Officer (RCO) program in 2019 with  
8           six officers deployed overseas.

9           (2) As of January 2025, the program had  
10          grown in size to 20 RCO positions, spanning across  
11          all the regional bureaus.

12          (3) RCOs assess and report on emerging pat-  
13          terns in activity by the People’s Republic of China  
14          (PRC), help United States diplomatic missions focus  
15          on the most important, PRC-related, United States  
16          priorities, and help coordinate effective messaging  
17          and strategies to counter PRC malign influence in  
18          the region.

19          (4) The RCO program is part of the Office of  
20          China Coordination in the Bureau of East Asia and  
21          Pacific Affairs at the State Department.

22   **SEC. 3. SENSE OF CONGRESS.**

23          It is the sense of Congress that—

24          (1) the United States is engaged in a global  
25          competition for influence with the People’s Republic  
26          of China (PRC), which requires that the United

1 States adequately monitor and analyze PRC malign  
2 activity that is contrary to United States interests  
3 globally;

4 (2) the RCO program is a key asset for the De-  
5 partment of State in the context of strategic com-  
6 petition with China at the global, regional, and sub-  
7 regional levels; and

8 (3) the United States must continue to counter  
9 PRC activities that seek to coerce other countries,  
10 distort markets, and undermine United States inter-  
11 ests.

12 **SEC. 4. REGIONAL CHINA PROGRAM UNIT.**

13 (a) AUTHORIZATION.—The Secretary of State shall  
14 establish within the Office of China Coordination of the  
15 Bureau of East Asia and Pacific Affairs a Regional China  
16 Officer Program Unit.

17 (b) STAFFING.—The Regional China Officer Pro-  
18 gram Unit shall be comprised of—

19 (1) one Director appointed in accordance with  
20 subsection (c); and

21 (2) not fewer than 20 forward-deployed Foreign  
22 Service Officers assigned to United States diplo-  
23 matic or consular posts or detailed to the foreign  
24 ministry of an ally, to be known as Regional China  
25 Officers (RCOs), who shall be responsible for—

1 (A) monitoring and reporting on activities  
2 of the People's Republic of China in the region  
3 of his or her responsibility, including in the  
4 commercial, development, finance, critical infra-  
5 structure, technology, and military domains, in-  
6 cluding projects associated with the PRC's Belt  
7 and Road Initiative, Global Security Initiative,  
8 and Global Development Initiative; and

9 (B) advising United States embassy per-  
10 sonnel, diplomatic allies and partners, and host  
11 countries on how to understand and address  
12 PRC activities globally and locally.

13 (c) DIRECTOR OF THE REGIONAL CHINA OFFICER  
14 PROGRAM.—

15 (1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 90 days after  
16 the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary  
17 of State shall appoint a Director for the Regional  
18 China Officer Program Unit from among career  
19 members of the Foreign Service.

20 (2) LIMITATION ON POSITION.—The establish-  
21 ment of the position of the Director pursuant to this  
22 section shall not result in an increase in the overall  
23 full-time equivalent positions within the Department.

1           (3) RESPONSIBILITIES.—The Director shall be  
2     responsible for coordinating and overseeing the ac-  
3     tivities of RCOs in order to—

4           (A) improve United States responsiveness  
5     to activities, strategies and tactics of the Peo-  
6     ple’s Republic of China (PRC);

7           (B) ensure that RCO program activities in-  
8     crease the knowledge, understanding, and trust  
9     of the United States by relevant target audi-  
10    ences;

11          (C) identify gaps in United States engage-  
12    ments regarding PRC cross-cutting activities;  
13    and

14          (D) manage hiring for RCO positions.

15    (d) REGIONAL CHINA OFFICERS.—

16          (1) QUALIFICATIONS.—The Secretary of State  
17    shall select and assign RCOs from among Foreign  
18    Service Officers who have expertise related to the  
19    PRC, including in the forms of prior experience  
20    working in or on China, Taiwan, and Hong Kong,  
21    and proficiency in Mandarin language.

22          (2) GEOGRAPHIC PLACEMENT.—Of the total  
23    number of RCOs in the Regional China Officer Pro-  
24    gram Unit, there shall be no fewer than 2 Regional  
25    China Officers assigned to United States diplomatic

1 posts associated with each of the following bu-  
2 reaus—

3 (A) Bureau of African Affairs;

4 (B) Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Af-  
5 fairs;

6 (C) Bureau of European and Eurasian Af-  
7 fairs;

8 (D) Bureau of International Organization  
9 Affairs;

10 (E) Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs;

11 (F) Bureau of South and Central Asian  
12 Affairs; and

13 (G) Bureau of Western Hemisphere Af-  
14 fairs.

15 (e) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—

16 (1) EXPANSION OF THE RCO PROGRAM.—There  
17 is authorized to be appropriated \$2,500,000 for each  
18 of fiscal years 2026 through 2030 to—

19 (A) expand the RCO program at strategic  
20 United States diplomatic missions and at the  
21 foreign ministries of allies; and

22 (B) support the management of the RCO  
23 program, including one Locally Employed Staff  
24 support position in each geographic region.

1           (2) PROGRAMS AND ACTIVITIES.—There is au-  
2           thorized to be appropriated \$1,250,000 for each of  
3           fiscal years 2026 through 2030 with up to \$50,000  
4           for each Regional China Officer to support programs  
5           and public diplomacy activities of the Regional  
6           China Officer Program.

7           (3) AVAILABILITY.—Amounts appropriated pur-  
8           suant to the authorizations under this section are  
9           authorized to remain available until expended and  
10          shall be in addition to amounts otherwise authorized  
11          to be appropriated for the Countering PRC Influ-  
12          ence Fund.

13          (f) SUNSET.—The requirement to maintain the Re-  
14          gional China Officer Program Unit and the Regional  
15          China Officer Program under subsection (a) shall expire  
16          on the date that is 5 years after the date of the enactment  
17          of this Act.

18          (g) ALLY DEFINED.—In this Act, the term “ally”  
19          means only—

20                 (1) a member country of the North Atlantic  
21          Treaty Organization; or

22                 (2) a country designated as a major non-NATO  
23          ally pursuant to the authorities provided by section  
24          517 of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 (22  
25          U.S.C. 2321k).