

PRESS CONFERENCE BY CONGRESSMAN HOWARD L. BERMAN  
GLOBAL PARTNERSHIPS ACT OF 2012  
DECEMBER 12, 2012

Welcome, and thank you all for coming.

Last night I introduced H.R. 6644, the Global Partnerships Act of 2012. This is the first comprehensive proposal to adapt our foreign aid laws to the post-Cold War era and codify the lessons of the past 50 years. It would fundamentally change the way that we plan, manage, and carry out our overseas assistance programs.

The major reforms in this bill include:

- Requiring strategies with clear goals and benchmarks, so that we know what success will look like.
- Better monitoring and evaluation, so that our aid decisions can be based on facts and evidence.

- Increasing transparency, which will permit better accountability and oversight.
- Eliminating duplication and waste, by establishing a clear division of labor and improving interagency coordination.
- Making aid more efficient and effective, by slashing red tape and leveraging private investment.

I know that many of you are wondering, why now? And the answer is quite simple: because this is how long it took to get it right.

This legislation represents the culmination of nearly five years of effort, starting in March 2008 when I assumed the chairmanship of the Committee on Foreign Affairs. It was developed through an open and inclusive process involving repeated consultations with interested groups, relevant committees, international partners, and federal agencies.

H.R. 6644 encapsulates not only the direct feedback we've received in those forums, but also many of the recommendations of the Presidential Policy Directive on Global Development and the Quadrennial Diplomacy and Development Review, or QDDR.

Obviously it is not my intention to have this legislation considered and passed in what remains of the 112<sup>th</sup> Congress. However, I believe this legislation offers a valid and constructive starting point for the future, and that is why I am so pleased that my distinguished colleague and good friend from Virginia, Mr. Connolly, is an original cosponsor. He is well-acquainted with the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 and acutely aware of the need for reform. I am confident that he will take a leadership role in moving this process forward in the next Congress.

I would also like to say a few words of thanks to the people who are up here on the podium with me. George Ingram was one of the first people who came up to me after I became

Chairman and talked to me about the importance of foreign aid reform. He was very convincing then, and I'm certain that he will be equally convincing today.

I'm also glad to be joined by Ritu Sharma, who is the Co-founder and President of Women Thrive Worldwide. She has not only brought the voice of women around the world into our process, but has consistently offered wise and constructive advice of her own.

Because today's date is 12/12/12, and there also happen to be 12 titles of the bill, and this is the 112<sup>th</sup> Congress, I thought it might be appropriate to give you the top 12 reasons for foreign aid reform. So, with apologies to David Letterman, here goes:

**Reason number 12: Because when you do small things right,  
big things happen.**

**Reason number 11: Because we ought to find out what works and stop doing what doesn't.**

**Reason number 10: Because if you don't know what you're trying to achieve, how will you know if it worked?**

**Reason number 9: Because we don't need two agencies doing the same thing in the same place at the same time.**

**Reason number 8: Because if James Bond can adapt to the post-Cold War era, so can foreign aid.**

**Reason number 7: Because my staff need something to put on their resumes. (And for that matter, so do I.)**

Oops! How'd that get in there?

**Let's try again. Reason number 7: Because the best time to stop a conflict is before it starts.**

**Reason number 6: Because partners are better than dependents.**

**Reason number 5: Because most of the money going into the developing world comes from the private sector.**

**Reason number 4: Because there ought to be some correlation between what the needs are and where the aid goes.**

**Reason number 3: Because no one really knows how much of the aid that's been approved has actually been spent.**

**Reason number 2: Because the system didn't get this way by accident, and it won't get better by itself.**

**And finally, reason number 1: Is there anyone who thinks that foreign aid is just fine the way it is?**

Thank you very much. I will now hand it over to George Ingram, who is a Senior Fellow at the Brookings Institution and Chairman Emeritus of the U.S. Global Leadership Coalition.