A Bill Has Already Been Introduced in Congress to Remove the US From the United Nations

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A bill introduced by Alabama Rep. Mike Rogers earlier this month calls on the US to "terminate" its membership in the United Nations (UN) and effectively sever all ties with the organization.

The legislation, titled the "[American Sovereignty Restoration Act of 2017](https://www.congress.gov/bill/115th-congress/house-bill/193/)," was proposed on January 3. It is co-sponsored by a handful of conservative-leaning lawmakers, including North Carolina Rep. Walter B. Jones, Arizona Rep. Andy Biggs, Missouri Rep. Jason Smith, Kentucky Rep. Thomas Massie, Tennessee Rep. John Duncan, Jr., and Florida Rep. Matt Gaetz.

The offices of the congressmen did not immediately respond to requests for comment.

The bill proposes barring the US from committing funds or troops to UN peacekeeping operations worldwide, and stipulates that the UN must vacate property owned by the United States government. It would repeal the 1973 Environment Program Participation Act, strip UN employees of diplomatic immunity in the United States, and repeal the US' membership and participation in the World Health Organization.

The bill's language is strong, and it's an extreme longshot to garner the necessary support to pass the House and move on to the Senate. Rogers tried, unsuccessfully, to pass a similar bill in 2015.

"I suspect foreign governments will be more interested in what the administration does with regard to the UN," said Stephen Biddle, adjunct senior fellow for defense policy at the Council on Foreign Relations and professor of political science and international affairs at George Washington University.

"This proposal doesn't strike me as something that's likely to rise above the noise," Biddle added, "but it does play into the administration's narrative about opposing multilateral institutions and withdrawing from global leadership roles."

President Donald Trump [has characterized](https://twitter.com/realDonaldTrump?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) the UN as "just a club for people to get together, talk and have a good time" and promised that relations between the US and the UN "will be different" during his presidency.

Trump's criticism of the organization came after the UN Security Council passed a resolution in late December calling on Israel to halt building settlements on occupied Palestinian land. Trump, along with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, urged the US to vote against the resolution, which was sponsored by Egypt. But the US ultimately abstained, and the resolution passed.

Many Republican lawmakers have slammed the UN for having an "anti-Israel" bias that aims to isolate and weaken the Jewish state. Arizona Sen. John McCain said that the UN vote marked "another shameful chapter in the bizarre anti-Israel history of the United Nations." House Speaker Paul Ryan called the vote "[absolutely shameful](https://twitter.com/SpeakerRyan/status/812383260974137344)" and vowed that "our unified Republican government" would work to reverse the resolution.

Few, if any, mainstream Republican lawmakers have gone as far as to advocate for a full withdrawal of the US from the UN. In 2015, Kentucky Senator Rand Paul [said he thought he'd be "happy to dissolve"](http://www.realclearpolitics.com/articles/2015/01/14/rand_paul_says_hed_be_happy_to_dissolve_the_un_125260.html) the United Nations, because he "dislike[s] paying for something that two-bit Third World countries with no freedom attack us and complain about the United States."

But some have said they would support defunding the organization, which [received $594 million](http://www.cnsnews.com/news/article/patrick-goodenough/three-billion-and-counting-us-taxpayers-will-fund-lions-share-un) — roughly 22% of its total budget — from the US in 2016.

In early January, [BuzzFeed reported](https://www.buzzfeed.com/paulmcleod/republicans-are-readying-a-push-to-defund-the-united-nations?utm_term=.vuAzmw19K#.op1EPMWJx) that the House Freedom Caucus was drafting a bill, proposed by South Carolina Sen. Lindsey Graham, to sever financial ties with the organization. Republican Sens.  Tom Cotton, John McCain, and Ted Cruz said that they would support the initiative.

“I anticipate this vote will create a backlash in Congress against the United Nations," Graham [said in a statement](http://www.lgraham.senate.gov/public/index.cfm/press-releases?ID=5BD4E916-0077-43B7-AAB9-44B21FFD41CD) shortly after the Israel resolution passed.  "The United Nations will regret this vote and I hope the Obama administration will realize the massive mistake they made on their way out of the door."

Nikki Haley, Trump's pick to replace Samantha Power as the US ambassador to the UN, said during her Senate confirmation hearing last week that the UN is a body that is "often at odds with American national interests," and called the US' decision to abstain from the Israel vote "a terrible mistake."

Still, she said that while the US should reexamine its "disproportionate" financial contribution to the UN, she doesn't think there should be "a slash and burn" of the US' support for the organization.

“I want to bring back faith in the UN," Haley said. "I want to show that we can be a strong voice at the UN. I want to show that we can make progress and have action at the UN.”