

# **Houston Area Model United Nations Specialized Committee**



## **Senate Foreign Relations**

**Chair | Ross Trivisonno  
Topic A Background Guide  
Houston Area Model United Nations 48  
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# Note to Delegates

## **Esteemed Senators,**

My name is Ross Trivisonno and I'm a very recent alum of The University of Texas at Austin – Hook'em! This past year, I graduated with degrees in Management, Government, History, and Plan II Honors. I first attended this conference as a freshman in high school many eons ago for HAMUN 39 and soon became addicted to Model UN. Countless crisis committees, dais gigs, OSGs – and nine years – later, I'm still as hooked on MUN as I've ever been. In fact, in 2020-21, I served as Secretary-General for HAMUN 46, and successfully led the organization to its first-ever all-virtual conference, a challenging but rewarding feat. Last year I stepped back from that post to serve as Deputy Secretary-General and the ceremonial chair of our General Assembly Plenary committee for a third time.

As you might imagine, Model UN has had an outsized role in my academic and professional upbringing; without the public speaking skills, policy acumen, strategic prowess, and organizational abilities I've gained and refined over the last near-decade in this activity, I wouldn't have been able to lead organizations, help rally others around big goals, and immerse myself in politics to such a degree. In MUN, I've been able to make lasting friendships, travel all across the state and country, and have certainly banged my fair share of gavels! It's without question the most pivotal extracurricular activity I've ever had the good sense to partake in, and I sincerely hope it will be (or has been) just as, if not more, impactful on all of your lives.

Now, to get down to business, the United States Senate Committee on Foreign Relations (SFRC) is widely considered one of the most prestigious and powerful committees on Capitol Hill. This iteration of the SFRC will kick off the 118th Congress, convening in January and February of 2023. Only a couple seats on the committee may be different from its composition in the 117th Congress.



In the instance of a change in membership composition after the fall midterms, the updated committee roster will be posted in the weeks leading up to conference; the Senate is likely to finalize new committee assignments towards the end of January.

Functionally, the committee will still utilize Model UN Robert's Rules of Order, albeit with a few additional basic Senate legislative procedures to be explained on the first day of conference. With regards to topics, the SFRC will be revisiting previously introduced legislation pertaining to U.S. aid and sanctions surrounding last year's Russian invasion of Ukraine, as well as Senate Joint Resolution 69 decrying the continued sale of U.S. arms to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in the wake of the 2018 murder of journalist Jamal Khashoggi. Delegates will analyze and amend former Senate Resolutions (examples of which are included in the following guides) pertaining to these respective topics, while also drafting, submitting, and voting on original, updated versions. Since Senate Foreign Relations is primarily responsible for overseeing foreign aid and approving arms sales, these two topics are extremely timely, sensitive, and fit squarely within the committee's scope of powers. I look forward to intense, vigorous debate on these two topics, and I predict there will be no shortage of drama-filled productivity!

Please reference the following background guide for a longer-form breakdown of this specialized Senate committee. You may also contact me directly at [rtrivisonno@gmail.com](mailto:rtrivisonno@gmail.com) with any questions or concerns. With that, I wish you all the best for conference and look forward to meeting you next month!

Best wishes,

**Ross Trivisonno**

Chair, United States Senate Committee  
on Foreign Relations

[rtrivisonno@gmail.com](mailto:rtrivisonno@gmail.com)





# Committee Information

## Committee Background & Overview

Formed in 1816, the United States Senate Committee on Foreign Relations (SFRC) is among the oldest and most prestigious standing committees on Capitol Hill. Typically, its 22-Senator membership is composed of some of the senior-most and highest-profile lawmakers in the upper chamber. Its primary duties consist of leading all foreign affairs-related debate in the greater Senate and voting on such legislation within committee. If a piece of legislation is assigned to Foreign Relations and is approved, after careful review and amendment, by way of a committee vote, then it is given the green light to move to the Senate floor for debate, amendment, and voting. Thus, like with any committee, pertinent legislation must move through the SFRC prior to being debated on by the entire chamber. Specifically, within foreign relations, the SFRC is primarily responsible for

overseeing arms sales or embargoes to various nations, for approving foreign aid programs, for vetting and confirming important foreign affairs nominees within a presidential administration (particularly the Department of State), and for drafting high-stakes foreign treaties.

Famous examples of foreign aid agreements and treaties brokered by Foreign Relations include the Marshall Plan and the establishment of the United Nations. Additionally, eight U.S. Presidents and 19 Secretaries of State are alumni of the SFRC.

Structurally, the overall SFRC has a Chair from the majority party and a Ranking Member who is the leader of the opposition from the minority party. With Democrats expanding their Senate majority, Foreign Relations – like all committees – remains under Democratic chairpersonship. Senator Bob Menendez (D-NJ) has returned as Chair during this 118<sup>th</sup> Congress. In recent years, the committee has expanded to 22 total members; the current partisan makeup stands at 11 Democrats and 11 Republicans.

This composition, however, may be subject to change as committees are currently being proportionally adjusted to reflect the overall Senate’s 51-49 Democratic-Republican partisan composition. The Senate reconvenes for formal deliberation later than the House – late January for the former, and early January immediately after New Year’s for the latter. Because of the Senate’s slower reconvening, committee assignments sometimes take until early March to be fully finalized in a new Congress. The official committee roster for this committee will be published in the weeks leading up to Congress and will be reflective of the current committee composition regardless of whether or not

adjustments have been made yet for the 118<sup>th</sup> Congress. All but one or two seats, though, are anticipated to remain the same as in the last Congress. All that said, the final committee roster, with subcommittee specifications, will be published in a newer document separate from these background guides, albeit on the same committee webpage. For reference, committee composition from the last 117<sup>th</sup> Congress (2021-2022) can be seen below. Please note that this is not the finalized roster for this HAMUN iteration of the committee. It will look very similar, but not exactly the same. Again, a finalized HAMUN committee roster for SFRC will be posted with character dossiers closer to the date of conference.

Majority (D)	Minority (R)
<div><b>Bob Menendez</b>, New Jersey, <i>Chairman</i> <b>Ben Cardin</b>, Maryland <b>Jeanne Shaheen</b>, New Hampshire <b>Chris Coons</b>, Delaware <b>Chris Murphy</b>, Connecticut <b>Tim Kaine</b>, Virginia <b>Ed Markey</b>, Massachusetts <b>Jeff Merkley</b>, Oregon <b>Cory Booker</b>, New Jersey <b>Brian Schatz</b>, Hawaii <b>Chris Van Hollen</b>, Maryland</div>	<div><b>Jim Risch</b>, Idaho, <i>Ranking Member</i> <b>Marco Rubio</b>, Florida <b>Ron Johnson</b>, Wisconsin <b>Mitt Romney</b>, Utah <b>Rob Portman</b>, Ohio <b>Rand Paul</b>, Kentucky <b>Todd Young</b>, Indiana <b>Ted Cruz</b>, Texas <b>John Barrasso</b>, Wyoming <b>Mike Rounds</b>, South Dakota <b>Bill Hagerty</b>, Tennessee</div>

Additionally, the seven subcommittees currently contained within the larger Senate Foreign Relations Committee include SFRC Subcommittees on 1.) Africa and Global Health Policy; 2.) East Asia, The Pacific, and International Cybersecurity Policy; 3.) Europe and Regional Security Cooperation; 4.) Multilateral International Development, Multilateral Institutions, and International Economic, Energy and Environmental Policy; 5.) Near East, South Asia, Central Asia, and Counterterrorism; 6.) State Department and USAID Management, International Operations, and Bilateral International Development; and 7.) Western Hemisphere, Transnational Crime, Civilian Security, Democracy, Human Rights and Global Women's Issues. Just like the overall SFRC, each subcommittee has a Chair from the majority party and a Ranking Member from the minority party to complete an

official subcommittee pairing. Delegates will have the option to conference within their own subcommittee pairings during unmoderated caucuses.

Generally speaking, this committee will function procedurally as a standard Model UN committee with the same general Robert's Rules of Order; a few amendments to these rules may be made at the Chair's discretion, but this will be mostly in terminology, not function. It is only substance-wise that this SFRC functions as something closer to a specialized or crisis committee. Substantively, delegates will be asked to assess and analyze previous Congressional legislation on both topics: American involvement and aid in Ukraine, and condemnation/sanctions towards U.S.-Saudi arms sales in the wake of the Khashoggi murder.



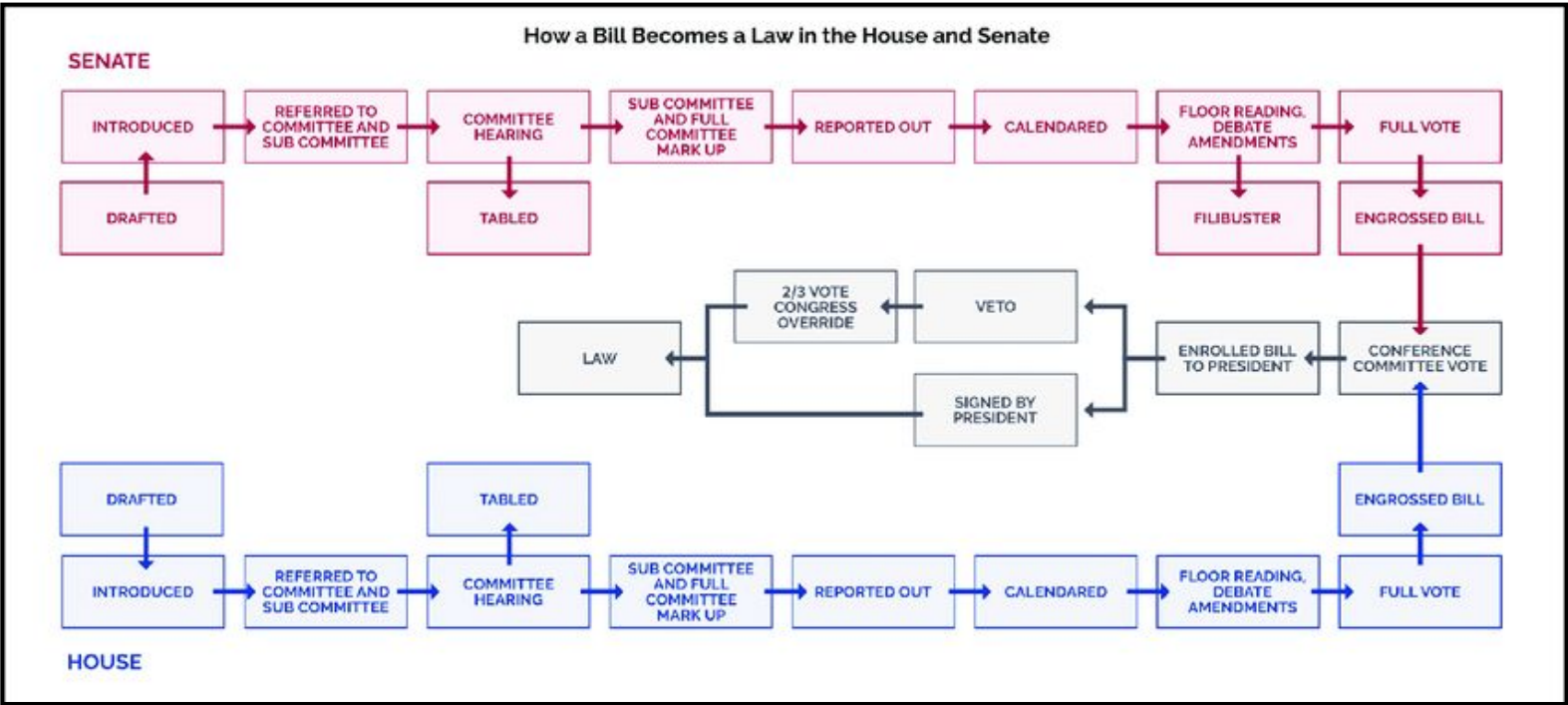


Featured bills and resolutions pertaining to the committee’s two topics that were previously introduced to the Senate and reviewed by the SFRC are included in the remainder of the backgrounds guides. **Position papers should be written in response to these featured examples.** Take a position for or against certain elements of the bills or resolutions (in coherence with your party and/or Senator’s specific ideological stance), use Congress.gov to search for and reference other related pieces of legislation already in Congressional circulation, and also propose new, original legislation to be introduced in committee.

As it follows, delegates should expect to amend these featured bills/resolutions, as one of the key goals of this committee is

to revisit this legislation for updated passage in the new Congress. Delegates are also encouraged to use this as inspiration to draft entirely new and original legislation on these topics for further review and mark-up by the committee during conference. Formal Foreign Relations committee hearings will ensue in lieu of moderated caucusing for any legislation introduced or re-introduced to the committee by delegates.

Further specifics on the flow of legislative submission, review, and approval by the committee will be given in-person on the first morning of committee. However, seen below is a brief overview of how a Senate committee fits into the larger legislative flow of both Congressional chambers:





# Topic A: *Fighting Putin's Gambit: The U.S. Congressional Response to the Invasion & Russification of Ukraine*

## Topic Background & History

Between November of 2013 and February of 2014, then-Ukrainian President Viktor Yanukovych's controversial decision to not sign on to the European Union-Ukraine Association Agreement resulted in his ouster after months of mass rioting. On February 22, 2014, Ukrainian Parliament voted to oust Yanukovych from office. Yanukovych fled the city, alleging that this vote by Parliament was illegal and possibly coerced by nefarious factions. Yanukovych then sent a plea to President Vladimir Putin of Russia for help in legitimizing him as leader once more. Russia came to Yanukovych's aid, intentionally not recognizing the new interim government led temporarily by Arseniy Yatsenyuk. Petro Poroshenko later became president after a landslide victory in the snap election called several months later in May of 2014. Yatsenyuk and Poroshenko both formally signed parts of the EU-Ukraine Association Agreement, with the latter president finalizing its most important economic tenets on June 27, 2014.

The initial political fallout surrounding Yanukovych and Putin's intervention sparked mass international outcry as well as the eventual, formal commencement of the Russo-Ukrainian War. Pro-Russian unrest became strongest in the south and east of Ukraine; President Putin took advantage of this instability, sending legions of Russian troops into Ukraine's Crimea. These troops soon took over key

infrastructure and government buildings, culminating in the region's full-on annexation. Several separatist movements such as in the Donbas (a region along Ukraine's eastern border with Russia) have been especially persistent, breaking out in 2014 and eventually developing into long and bruising proxy wars that have lasted until the present day. Diplomatic agreements since the war's outbreak, such as the Minsk II agreements of 2015, have largely failed, with their implementation ignored and never fully enacted.

In 2019, Ukrainian President Poroshenko was defeated electorally by the now-incumbent President Volodymyr Zelenskyy. Poroshenko's defeat came mostly as a result of his failure to end what had then turned into a very protracted and taxing war; other corruption scandals, as well as a suspected Russian disinformation campaign against him also played a role in his demise. Regardless, this set the stage for one of the more transformative eras in modern Ukrainian history. Under President Zelenskyy, an anti-corruption, anti-establishment political outsider, Ukraine has undergone significant social and political progress. Zelenskyy has prioritized utilizing a mass digital information and e-governance campaign to unite the Ukrainian and Russian-speaking regions of Ukraine, while also tackling corruption and initially promising to end the war and engage in substantial new dialogue with Putin.

In 2021, however, against the backdrop of increasing talks to bring Ukraine into NATO as a new member, Russia dramatically upped its military presence along the Ukrainian border, partially via a newly politically destabilized Belarus. By February of 2022, this military presence was on the verge of invasion, and after President Putin officially recognized two new states (the Donetsk and Luhansk People's Republics) within the Donbas separatist region, a full-scale special military invasion of Ukraine ensued – almost exactly eight years to day after Yanukovych's ouster sparked the first invasion and the official start of this war. The February 2022 invasion, however, is just the latest chapter. An updated November 2022 territorial map

of Ukraine, post-invasion, from The New York Times, can be seen below.

Over the past year, the international community has responded to Russia with widespread condemnation of its latest Ukrainian invasion, and the conflict has entered its most public era to date. This is in part due to the substantial refugee crisis that has resulted in more than 8 million Ukrainian displaced across Europe, as well as a similar number displaced internally within the country. It is the largest refugee crisis of the 21st century.

The West has taken a particularly active stance against Russia in favor of Ukraine, with countless countries imposing increased sanctions on Russia, and send

-ing aid to Ukraine. Politically, President Zelenskyy has proven to be an extraordinarily savvy and vocal leader – especially on social media – of Ukraine's large-scale alignment with the United States and its NATO allies. Just a couple months ago, he was even named 2022 Time Person of the Year. This popularity culminated in Zelenskyy's recent full state address to Congress on December 21, 2022. This was a momentous address – a historic milestone in U.S.-Ukrainian relations – and a particularly timely address given the events of the past year.



In a press release representing Senate Democrats and recent bipartisan legislation on the topic, Senate Majority Whip Dick Durbin (D-IL) described Zelenskyy's long-awaited visit to the United States as historic:

*"For ten months, the Ukrainian people have put up a valiant fight against Russia's renewed aggression—and that few thought they could win, but here they are, still standing. That is in part due to President Zelenskyy's tireless leadership and courageous fight for his country. In fact, just earlier this week, President Zelenskyy was at the front lines of this war fighting alongside his fellow Ukrainians in Bakhmut. Today's address called on Congress to do everything we can to provide the Ukrainian people with additional aid to fight back against Putin. And Congress is doing just that – we are about to pass an omnibus that contains necessary funds for our Ukrainian allies. I'm also thrilled that just this morning, my Justice for Victims of War Crimes Act passed the Senate to hold Putin's henchmen responsible for the unspeakable atrocities committed in Ukraine."* (Durbin)

This represents the overall tone and tenor of the Democratic Party and the Biden Administration's prevailing attitude towards the Russo-Ukrainian War and President Zelenskyy's efforts. While the overall GOP has not been nearly as effusive in its pro-Ukrainian sentiments (with support waning a bit as the recent November midterms drew nearer), Senate Republicans in particular have still offered largely bipartisan support on pro-Ukraine legislation. Some elements of the far-right wing of the GOP have even gone so far as to

proclaim support for Russia and President Putin; however, among the Congressional Republican establishment, there still exists firm support for Ukraine. As a result, this topic has been a rare bipartisan touchstone for the U.S. Senate—particularly amongst political moderates—during the 117th Congress and looks to be in the 118th as well. The Senate Foreign Relations Committee has read dozens of bills and resolutions pertaining to this topic, particularly around the subject of Ukrainian aid appropriations. While bills pertaining to foreign aid appropriations must pass through multiple different Senate committees (namely the Senate Appropriations Committee, as it follows), they are also heard by the SFRC. During conference, the SFRC will be particularly concerned with hearing debate, and reviewing legislation, pertaining to Ukrainian aid and Russian sanctions.

Enclosed below is a featured bill, S.3724, introduced by Senator Marco Rubio (R-FL) in the immediate wake of last year's invasion. The Chair would smile upon a revisitation of this legislation with necessary updates and revisions made to reflect everything that has transpired over the last 11 months. The first task of this committee should be to either approve a revised/marked-up version of this bill, or to draft entirely original legislation inspired by many of these aid provisions, also bearing in mind what was just passed in this past December's landmark bipartisan omnibus bill. Additional related bills (including the omnibus), most importantly ones that have passed the full Senate, can be found in a quick search at [Congress.gov](https://www.congress.gov).



117<sup>TH</sup> CONGRESS  
2<sup>D</sup> SESSION

# S. 3724

To provide emergency supplemental appropriations in response to the crisis in Ukraine, and for other purposes.

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## IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

MARCH 1, 2022

Mr. RUBIO introduced the following bill; which was read the first time

MARCH 2, 2022

Read the second time and placed on the calendar

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## A BILL

To provide emergency supplemental appropriations in response to the crisis in Ukraine, and for other purposes.

*Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

### SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the “Ukraine Emergency Appropriations Act of 2022”.

### SEC. 2. EMERGENCY APPROPRIATIONS FOR DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE ASSISTANCE.

(a) **PROVISION OF DEFENSE ASSISTANCE TO UKRAINE.**—There is appropriated, out of any money in the Treasury not otherwise appropriated, \$1,000,000,000 to the Secretary of Defense for fiscal year 2022, to remain available until September 30, 2024, for “Procurement, Defense-wide” to provide the Government of Ukraine the following:

(1) Small arms, grenade launchers, and ammunition previously allocated for provision to Afghan Security Forces under the Afghan Security Forces Fund.

(2) Man-portable missiles and rockets in a ready-to-fire configuration, including Dragon, Javelin, FIM-92 Stinger Missiles, and other light anti-tank weapons (66mm), shoulder-launched multi-purpose assault weapon rockets (83mm), M136 (AT4) anti-armor launchers, and cartridges (84mm).

(3) Night vision devices, including fused panoramic night vision goggles, squad binocular night vision goggles, and night vision and thermal and infrared sights for crew-served weapons.

(4) Unmanned aerial vehicles (tactical and armed) and crew-served weapons ammunition with low-light and infrared night sights.

(5) Secure, commercial-off-the-shelf communications capabilities, including hand-held secure communications devices.

(6) Individual protective equipment.

(7) Field rations.

(8) Field medical kits.

(b) **PROVISION OF DEFENSE ASSISTANCE TO NORTH ATLANTIC TREATY ORGANIZATION MEMBERS.**—There is appropriated, out of any money in the Treasury not otherwise appropriated, \$1,000,000,000 to the Secretary of Defense for fiscal year 2022, to remain available until September 30, 2024, for “Procurement, Defense-wide” to provide the Governments of Poland, Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia and other members of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization with planes, tanks, munitions, and anti-air and anti-tank weaponry to bolster the deterrence efforts of those Governments against an invasion by the Russian Federation and to replace equipment donated by those Governments to the Government of Ukraine.

(c) **PROCUREMENT OF REPLACEMENT DEFENSE ARTICLES.**—

(1) **IN GENERAL.**—There is appropriated, out of any money in the Treasury not otherwise appropriated, \$1,000,000,000 to the Secretary of Defense for fiscal year 2022, to remain available until expended, for “Procurement” to procure defense articles to replace defense articles transferred to Ukraine and members of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization.

(2) **DEFINITION OF DEFENSE ARTICLE.**—In this subsection, the term “defense article” has the meaning given that term in section 47 of the Arms Export Control Act ([22 U.S.C. 2794](#)).

(d) UNITED STATES DEFENSE AGAINST CYBERATTACKS.—There is appropriated, out of any money in the Treasury not otherwise appropriated, \$1,000,000,000 to the Secretary of Defense for fiscal year 2022, to remain available until expended, for “Operation and Maintenance, Defense-wide” to enhance the capability of the Department of Defense to defend against a cyberattack originating in the Russian Federation or Belarus that targets critical infrastructure of the United States or the ability of the United States to retaliate against a nuclear attack.

(e) HUMANITARIAN OPERATIONS TO SUPPORT UKRAINE.—There is appropriated, out of any money in the Treasury not otherwise appropriated, \$400,000,000 to the Secretary of Defense for fiscal year 2022, to remain available until expended, for “Overseas Humanitarian, Disaster, and Civic Aid” to conduct delivery of humanitarian assistance to Ukraine.

### **SEC. 3. EMERGENCY APPROPRIATIONS FOR DEPARTMENT OF STATE ASSISTANCE.**

(a) INTERNATIONAL DISASTER ASSISTANCE.—There is appropriated, out of any money in the Treasury not otherwise appropriated, \$500,000,000 to the Secretary of State for fiscal year 2022, to remain available until expended, for “International Disaster Assistance” to address humanitarian needs in Ukraine due to the impact caused by the Russian Federation's invasion.

(b) MIGRATION AND REFUGEE ASSISTANCE.—There is appropriated, out of any money in the Treasury not otherwise appropriated, \$500,000,000 to the Secretary of State for fiscal year 2022, to remain available until expended, for “Migration and Refugee Assistance” to assist refugees from Ukraine.

(c) DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE.—There is appropriated, out of any money in the Treasury not otherwise appropriated, \$500,000,000 to the Secretary of State for fiscal year 2022, to remain available until expended, for “Development Assistance” to rebuild infrastructure in Ukraine damaged by the Russian Federation's invasion.

(d) ECONOMIC SUPPORT FUND.—There is appropriated, out of any money in the Treasury not otherwise appropriated, \$500,000,000, to the Secretary of State for fiscal year 2022, to remain available until expended, for “Economic Support Fund” assistance to support the revitalization of Ukraine’s economy after the Russian Federation's invasion.

### **SEC. 4. EMERGENCY DESIGNATION.**

(a) IN GENERAL.—The amounts provided by this Act are designated as an emergency requirement pursuant to section 4(g) of the Statutory Pay-As-You-Go Act of 2010 ([2 U.S.C. 933\(g\)](#)).

(b) DESIGNATION IN HOUSE AND SENATE.—This Act is designated as an emergency requirement pursuant to subsections (a) and (b) of section 4001 of S. Con. Res. 14 (117th Congress), the concurrent resolution on the budget for fiscal year 2022.



# Questions & Further Reading

## Questions to Consider

- What is the ideological nature of your Senator's personal stance on this issue?
- What is your party's stance? Does your Senator's stance align with their party's?
- How much foreign aid are you willing to appropriate for Ukraine? Would foreign aid play well with your constituents in your home state, if at all?
- Think about the specific regions of the current conflict – reference the attached map and any others you might find online. Can we stipulate exactly where such foreign aid should be directed geographically? What types of arms would be needed, why, and where?
- When it comes to economic sanctions against Russia, are sanctions truly effective or are they inadvertently crippling to innocent civilians within the country that such sanctions are being levied against? What does your Senator think about this?
- Senator Rubio's bill mentions directing aid to other NATO members to help them indirectly fight Russia as well. Should we do this, and, if so, to which ones? Does this need to be updated based on the events of the last year?
- How can Congress direct the Biden administration to make further improvements in its cooperation with, and leadership of, other international bodies (NATO, the UN, etc.) to support Ukraine? What facets of the U.S.'s relations with Zelenskyy and company can be made even more productive?
- Specifically, where are the funds for this foreign aid going to come from? And where should they be funneled to within the executive branch? Who has jurisdiction over what? Congressionally, which committees might also be reviewing this legislation before passage?
- Think about subcommittees as well. How can you work with your subcommittee pairing, if pertinent to this legislation, to improve legislation on this topic?

# Questions & Further Reading

## Sources

“Congress.gov | Library of Congress.” Congress.gov, Library of Congress, <https://www.congress.gov/>.

Durbin, Dick. “Durbin Statement Following Ukraine President Zelensky's Address to a Joint Session of Congress: U.S. Senator Dick Durbin of Illinois.” Press Release | Press Releases | Newsroom | U.S. Senator Dick Durbin of Illinois, 21 Dec. 2022, <https://www.durbin.senate.gov/newsroom/press-releases/durbin-statement-following-ukraine-president-zelenskys-address-to-a-joint-session-of-congress>.

“NATO's Response to Russia's Invasion of Ukraine.” NATO, North Atlantic Treaty Organization, 9 Dec. 2022, [https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics\\_192648.htm](https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_192648.htm).

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