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Georgia Support Act reintroduced to US House of Representatives



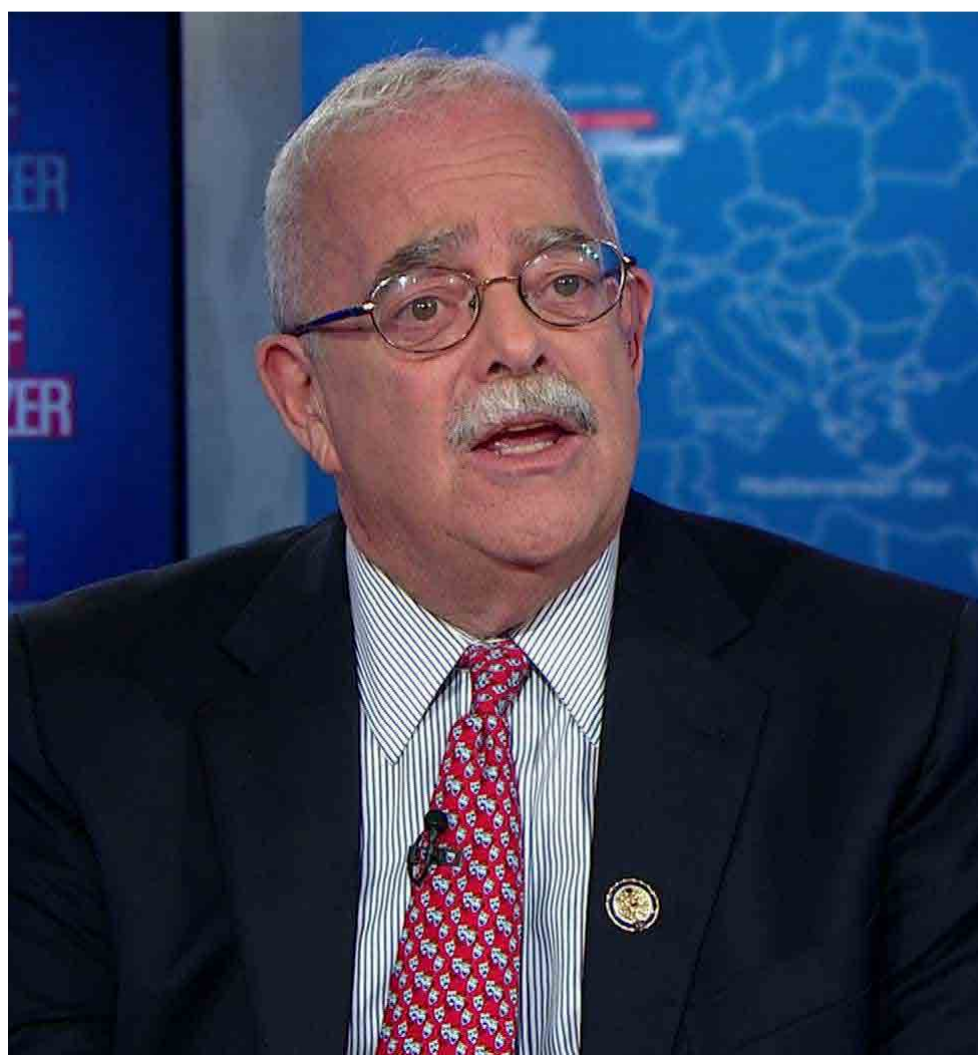
► Adam Kinzinger

BY VERONIKA MALINBOYM

US congressmen and chairmen of the Georgia Caucus Representatives Adam Kinzinger and Gerry Conolly reintroduced the Georgia Support Act to the House of Representatives. According to the description provided on the website of Official House of Representatives the proposed document asserts the US' support for the independence and sovereignty of Georgia. According to the proposed act, the United States recognizes Georgia's commitment to democratic values such as free and fair elections, and condemns the Russian aggression in the region.

The document also notes that in the occupied region of Abkhazia and South Ossetia, Russia is purposely perpetrating civil unrest, aids the local separatist movements, and violates human rights. The document states that Russian forces continue to put pressure on the civil society residing along the border, and prevent the displaced persons from returning back to their homes.

Thus, Georgia Support Act would therefore reinstate the US support for the territorial integrity of Georgia by means of introducing sanctions against the individuals who are responsible for the aforementioned violations of human rights and rights of displaced persons.



► Gerry Conolly

"It has been more than 12 years since Russian forces occupied Georgian territories. However, regardless of the violations of the fundamental human rights that Russia has been committing, Georgia continued to work hard to develop democracy and ensure independence for its people. That's why it is so important to reintroduce this act. As a co-chair of the Georgia Caucus Representatives, I would like to express my strong support towards our Georgian friends in their struggle against the Russian aggression. I would like to thank my colleague, Congressman Conolly, for his dedication to a free and independent Georgia," Kinzinger said.

According to Congressman Conolly, the proposed Act will further strengthen the US-Georgia partnership:

"I am proud to reintroduce the Georgia Support Act, which strengthens the vital US-Georgia partnership, a strategically important relationship in a critical part of the world. The document once again proves that the United States of America fully supports Georgia's sovereignty, as well its further democratic development and security, especially while constantly being threatened with the Russian aggression. As president of the NATO Parliamentary Assembly, I am pleased that this bill recognizes that Georgia has been a longstanding NATO-aspirant country," Congressman Conolly concluded.

EU to allocate €40 million to vaccination in Georgia

THE EU-FUNDED INITIATIVE WILL SUPPORT SIX COUNTRIES



► EU Ambassador emphasized the importance of proper and efficient vaccination campaign

► The project will be implemented by the World Health Organization

BY NIKA GAMTSEMLIDZE

The European Union will partner up with the World Health Organization Regional Office for Europe to support the deployment of Covid-19 vaccines in Georgia. The initiative is fully funded by the European Union and is implemented with the World Health Organization. The WHO will cover all of the vaccination phases.

The project, announced by the EU yesterday, will be implemented by the World Health Organization over the three-year period. The initiative supports six countries.

Carl Hartzell, the Ambassador of the EU in Georgia, noted that in the efforts to stop the Covid-19 pandemic, 'a proper and efficient vaccination campaign is key.' The Ambassador also noted that the European Union

continues to stand by Georgia during the Covid-19 pandemic and is happy to launch the new initiative with the World Health Organization.

The Ambassador also noted that the project would "support the complex vaccination rollout so that vaccines, when they arrive, are efficiently utilized and reach those who need them most".

The Health Minister recently

announced that the country will receive additional 150,000 doses of AstraZeneca vaccine.

She also reiterated that the country would receive the first batch of the Covid-19 vaccine at the end of the month.

According to the Minister of Health, the contract has already been signed.

The above-mentioned project is not the first one aimed at supporting Georgia during

the pandemic. It is built upon the European Union's and the WHO's ongoing support for various countries in need of help to fight the pandemic.

The project includes the joint 35 Million EU Solidarity for Health Initiative, which has helped EU partner countries to better address the needs of the most vulnerable.

One-time entry into Parliament - Republicans' initiative

BY NATALIA KOCHIASHVILI

If the Georgian Dream submits a draft constitutional amendment to parliament that calls for a natural threshold for the 2024 parliamentary elections, two republican lawmakers, Khatuna Samnidze and Tamar Kordzaia, are ready to support it in all three hearings. As the party chairwoman Khatuna Samnidze explained, this does not mean continuing to work in the parliament, rather 'holding hands to for a better future'.



► "It was not a narrow-party decision to join the bloc, or to support the 2018 presidential candidate Grigol Vashadze," Khatuna Samnidze announced.

"If the government dares and is ready to offer us a system with a natural threshold proportional system, to register this bill, we, the Republicans, are ready to support it during the voting."

Samnidze explained that she has no intention of working with the current parliament. According to her, the government inadequately assesses the situation and refuses to compromise.

The chairwoman claims that her party's idea - to run in the vote if the draft law on the natural barrier is registered - does not go against the agreement of the opposition parties. According to her, there is a stagnation in the negotiation process.

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FRIDAY FEBRUARY 12

Day Sunshine
High: 17°C
Night Partly cloudy
Low: 6°C

SATURDAY FEBRUARY 13

Day Partly cloudy
High: 10°C
Night Partly cloudy
Low: 2°C

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US DOLLAR - 3.3112 | EURO - 4.0145 | GBP - 4.5834 | 100 RUSSIAN RUBLE - 4.4852 | SWISS FRANC - 3.7159 |

Georgian citizens allowed temporary legal employment in Germany

BY NATALIA KOCHIASHVILI

Georgian citizens will be able to work in Germany for 3 months. Seasonal works will start in Germany from April 1. The registration process will start on February 15 and will last throughout the year.

Employment for seasonal jobs involves harvesting a variety of seasonal crops. The duration of employment is from 1 to 3 months. Working hours are 8-10 hours a day, 5-6 days a week. The workers will be paid minimum wage, €9.50 per hour (accrued), which will be deducted from taxes, food and accommodation expenses.

Employment is mainly available for seasonal work in the agricultural sector. The job seeker should register on the special registration portal and must be a citizen of Georgia, 18-60 years old, who has not traveled to the Schengen area for 3 months before leaving for Germany. The person should be in a good Physical health, has to have work experience and motivation for harvesting, doesn't have any violations that restrict their re-entry into the country and has elementary communication skills in German or English (in case of group employment, it is necessary that at least one member is able to communicate in German or English). The language requirement as well as the final decision on employment is determined by the employer.

At a press conference on the Temporary Legal Employment Program in Germany, the Minister of Health Ekaterine Tikaradze noted that initially only 500 people had the opportunity to participate in the program, but this year the number is not



► "Negotiations are underway with other countries, at this stage it is Bulgaria and Israel, we also have a dialogue with France. It will not be a one-year program, it will be systematic," the minister said.



► Seasonal works will start in Germany from April 1.

defined and all those who meet the relevant requirements, will be employed. She also met with the Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Federal Republic of Germany Hubert Knirsch to discuss temporary legal employment in Germany and signed the agreement on the program.

"We are cooperating with the German private sector and the demand for labor is in line with the needs of the private sector. This is the first pilot project in Germany," she said.

According to her, the Georgian government is working to expand the sectors, so that more people can gain European work experience/skills in addition to the financial benefits. Tikaradze announced negotiations on legal employment of Georgians are underway with three other countries - Bulgaria, Israel and France.

One-time entry into Parliament - Republicans' initiative

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The parties have moved into their own entrails and the intra reorganization processes have started; and in such context, "one of the important fronts, which is related to the constitutional change, must be attacked."

"As an opposition party, I will do my best not to have a bipartisan parliament, a one-party parliament, polarization and a guaranteed multi-party parliament. One guarantee of this is the proportional system, the natural threshold. The Georgian Dream says that they will register such a bill if opposition enters the parliaments, because without them there will not be enough votes.

Therefore, we tell them the opposite - the registration of a bill does not require our entry into Parliament," explained

Samnidze, adding that this is an idea around which the entire opposition united 2 years ago and it is unimaginable that a political party would not vote for this opportunity for the country to adopt such an electoral system.

The position of the chairwoman of the Republican Party, is not unacceptable for Armaz Akhvlediani, who has been elected a member of parliament from the list of European Georgia.

"As I understand it, if the GD proposes an important bill, let's go in and support it, I do not see anything dramatic here," Akhvlediani said, adding that many decisions will be useful and in his view, this does not mean refusing to boycott.

Strategy Builder and Lelo don't share the position of the Republicans to support the constitutional change related to natural barrier to participate in the one-time voting in the Parli-

ment. According to Bezhashvili, the UN will support the natural barrier in the context of early elections.

Mamuka Mdinardze, chairman of the Georgian Dream faction, said at a briefing on February 8 that the ruling party was ready to consider a barrier-free electoral system for the 2024 elections. Mdinardze responded to the proposal of the party Girchi which envisages the establishment of a natural threshold for the parliamentary elections. According to Mdinardze, in the memorandum, which is open to all parliamentary parties, the Georgian Dream has already committed itself to lowering the electoral threshold for the 2024 parliamentary elections from 0 to 3% if there are enough votes (mandates). According to him, the ruling team is considering all options, including the security system.

The memorandum, which is signed by the Citizens party in addition to the Georgian Dream, reads: "According to the first paragraph of the memorandum, a threshold of less than 5%, not more than 3%, will be set for the 2024 parliamentary elections." It also states that the threshold will be specified within the framework of public and parliamentary discussions of the relevant constitutional bill.

Under the current constitution, parliamentary elections from 2024 will be held in a fully proportional system with a 5% threshold.

The Georgian Dream did not support the abolition of the mandate of 51 opposition MPs, including the Republicans, in a February 2 plenary vote. One of their demands is to call early parliamentary elections.



► "We are in a boycott mode, we are not going to work in this parliament and we will call this initiative voting for the future."