

AMERICAS ACT

A Plan to Promote Trade, Investment, &
People-to-People Partnerships

U.S. SENATOR

FOR LOUISIANA

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Cassidy's Americas Act

Our hemispheric policy has historically lacked a coherent mechanism for regional integration. Every new administration of either party comes into office declaring that they will focus on the hemisphere, and quickly they forget this commitment as other concerns of office take precedence. It is high time that we place hemispheric integration at the center of our foreign policy. Our new 'Cold War' with China has highlighted the problem, as demonstrated by the COVID-19 supply chain disasters. Our 'divorce' from China, more than a decade in the making, is now a reality. We now know we cannot productively work with China.

But the hemisphere is important beyond simply our challenges with China. More than 60 million Americans are of Hispanic descent. The United States is the fourth largest Spanish speaking country in the world. The hemisphere has more than a billion people; and an economy (outside U.S.) of more than 8 trillion dollars. Together, we grow all the food we need; we have all the critical minerals we need; we have educated labor forces; we have capital and technology and cultural affinity.

What we do not have is a mechanism for countering the corruption and improving the governance in countries of the hemisphere. Of bringing business engagement into the light, of reducing the impact of the illicit "grey" economies by facilitating registration, taxation and regulation in a transparent manner.

What we do not have is a platform for integration. There is no progressively growing trade body that links the US with our hemispheric allies and them with each other in a common community of trade. There is no real investment platform to address the tremendous infrastructure needs of the hemisphere that can serve both public and private entities in bridging the gaps to effective commerce. There are no incentives to encourage businesses in China to return to the hemisphere; and no special authorities to implant our strategic supply chains in friendly countries closer to home.

Finally, there is no tailored hemispheric plan to reinforce our shared values through increasing ties between our countries.

The Americas Trade and Investment Act, or the "Americas Act" as it will be called addresses these issues in a comprehensive, sustainable and progressive manner which seeks generational integration and improvement patiently and through measured steps leading to a more just and more prosperous hemisphere.



Americas Act Pillars

1. The Americas Partnership

2. E-Governance System

3. Trade

4. Investment

5. People-to-People



1. Americas Partnership

The bill creates the “Americas Partnership,” which is an expanding community of nations in the hemisphere focused on taking steps to improve hemispheric integration with the aim of creating more prosperous societies for their people.

Memorandum of Understanding

- ⇒ Commits partners to use the e-governance system to combat corruption
- ⇒ Reenforces democracy and rule of law
- ⇒ Commits partners to joining U.S.–Mexico–Canada Agreement (USMCA) common trade zone
- ⇒ Includes commitments to reduce Chinese influence in hemisphere
- ⇒ Creates a working group to develop uniform regulation across Americas Partnership countries
- ⇒ Creates path to solving legal disputes

The program will be administered by the Department of Commerce within the office of the Under-Secretary for International Trade Administration.

- ⇒ Creation of a new Deputy Under-Secretary for the Americas Partnership
 - ⇒ New Commercial Attaches in Partnership countries
- ⇒ Creation of a new Assistant U.S. Trade Representative (USTR) for Americas Partnership
- ⇒ Creation of a new Deputy Assistant Secretary at the State Department’s Office of Western Hemisphere Affairs
- ⇒ Creation of a new Deputy Assistant Administrator within USAID’s Bureau of Latin America and the Caribbean

Program mandates Commerce to develop a Partnership Plan upon signature of the MOU that includes all components of the Americas Partnership in a master strategy for member country.



2. E-Governance System

The Americas Act will create an e-governance system which will administer all interactions (public and private) within the Americas Partnership.

→ Design:

→ Department of Commerce will manage the design of a comprehensive e-governance system.

→ The system will include (but not limited to) the following integration & capabilities:

→ United Nations Business Facilitation Programme's Digital Governance Platform

→ Distributed Ledger Technology

→ Customs and Border Protection's Authorized Economic Operator blockchain pilot program

→ MERCOSUR's digital databases

→ National business registry databases and plugins from private sector companies

→ Standards for entities seeking to create their own e-gov systems will be available

→ Code will be open source and auditable

→ Capabilities

→ Digital wallet for federal digital dollar payments

→ Tax registration and submission

→ Business registration

→ American University of the Americas Administration

→ Regulatory harmonization for the working group

→ Environmental compliance



3. Trade

Re-shoring and Near-shoring Account

- Creates a re-shoring and nearshoring account within the Treasury
 - Account will finance reshoring American industries, strategic supply chains, and other priorities
- Creates a \$40 billion borrowing authority within the Treasury
 - Tools include loans, grants, equity, lines of credit, and insurance

Tax Incentives

- \$5 billion in tax incentives for qualified re-shoring and nearshoring expenses for US companies from China

Trade

- Creates a docking mechanism within USMCA
- Instructs USTR to begin negotiations with USMCA partners to allow Americas Partnership countries to join USMCA+
- Expands Caribbean Basin Trade Preference Area to include Americas Partnership countries as a temporary step until USMCA membership can be extended



4. Investment

Americas Investment Corporation

- Creates the Americas Investment Corporation:
 - Tools include:
 - Preferential loans
 - Equity
 - Lines of Credit
 - Insurance/Reinsurance
 - Grants
 - No set limits either quantity or size
 - Eligibility for governments, businesses from US or the country

Enterprise Fund

- Creates the Americas Enterprise Fund to be privately established
 - Will offer mezzo-level grants and loans to local companies

Strategic Supply Chains

- Requires Commerce to submit a hemispheric strategy for strategic supply chains
- Provides for the creation of Strategic Economic Zones with wide latitude and notwithstanding authority to move strategic supply chains into the hemisphere

Energy Security

- Creates a program to promote energy development in the hemisphere



5. People-to-People Partnerships

People-to-People

- Humanitarian assistance for Americas Partnership countries
- Development assistance supporting the rollout of the e-government system, improvement of administrative systems, and USMCA compliance to Americas Partnership countries
- Cultural and educational affairs programs
 - Increased English language programming
 - Increased Ambassador Small Grant funds
 - Additional American Corners
 - Additional International Visitor Programs
 - Creation of a reverse International Visitor Program for people from USA to visit Americas Partnership countries
 - Deployment of additional Peace Corps volunteers
- CARE Visa
 - Creation of a new visa for elderly care in the United States
 - 7 year
 - Non-immigrant
 - Preferential rates and streamlined application process
- American University of the Americas
 - Support from USAID Hospitals and Schools Abroad
 - Up to three campuses: Central America, Caribbean, and Southern Cone
 - Prioritize STEM education
 - Creation of a Center of Excellence on Anti-Corruption
 - Will host the comprehensive e-government framework
- Create a Radio Free Americas to provide high quality content across the hemisphere



6. How We Pay For It

Appropriations

- Tariffs from de minimis reciprocity transferred to the re-shoring account

Accountability

- This program is fully paid for and self contained. It will only cost as much money as it brings in.
- It will also generate significant financial growth within the U.S.
- Creates a comprehensive report managed by the Commerce Department on all aspects of Americas Partnership, in coordination with State, USTR, and USAID
- Commerce Department will manage the Reshoring and Nearshoring account, including accruals and commitments. The account will grow as equity investments, loan interest, insurance fees, and pay-fors continue to flow into the account. Balance, commitments and mortgages will be reported annually in the Commerce Department's comprehensive report

