

KIPEC : Legislative updates from the National Assembly of Korea – March 2025



Key Legislation Passed in March

In March, the National Assembly of the Republic of Korea passed a total of 60 bills.

The National Pension Act Partial Amendment Bill

The National Pension Act Partial Amendment Bill aims to raise the pension contribution rate and income replacement rate, expand benefits for childbirth and military service, and include a government payment guarantee. The pension contribution rate will rise from 9% to 13%, while the income replacement rate will increase from 40% to 43%. Starting in 2026, the contribution rate will be increased by 0.5 percentage points each year for the next eight years, and the income replacement rate will be set at 43% beginning in 2026. Childbirth allowances, which were previously applied starting with the second child, will now be extended to the first child, with 12 months added for the first child, 12 months for the second, and 18 months for the third and any subsequent children. The military service benefit, which used to add 6 months for those who completed military service, will now allow up to 12 months to be counted based on the actual length of service.

The Promotion of the Healing Tourism Industry Bill

This bill seeks to establish a legal foundation for the development of the healing tourism industry, which integrates and combines various sectors such as agriculture, forestry, and marine industries. The proposed bill defines healing tourism as a form of tourism activity aimed at promoting health recovery and enhancement, as well as improving quality of life, by utilizing healing tourism resources such as landscapes, hot springs, and food. It also requires the Minister of Culture, Sports, and Tourism to develop a long-term plan every five years and an annual implementation plan to support and promote the healing tourism industry.

The amendment to the Personal Information Protection Act

The amendment to the Personal Information Protection Act requires foreign businesses to manage and oversee their domestic representatives, with fines of up to 20 million won for non-compliance. The domestic representative system enables our citizens to exercise their data rights, such as withdrawing consent and requesting access to or correction of their personal information from foreign businesses. It also ensures that foreign businesses can quickly provide information related to personal data breaches. This legislative measure is a response to the growing number of cases in which multiple foreign businesses have designated the same address for their domestic representatives, with no employees present at the location. This practice undermines the intended purpose of the system.



Major News from the National Assembly of South Korea – March

Mar 10th

› Establishment of the Korea-U.S. Parliamentary Union

Mar 10th

3rd National Policy Consultation Meeting chaired by the Speaker of the National Assembly

Mar 11th

Foreign Affairs and Unification Committee adopts the "Resolution in Support of the ROK-U.S. Alliance"

Mar 14th

Speaker of the National Assembly meets with former U.S. House Speaker Kevin McCarthy

Mar 17st

Expansion of the Appointment of the National Future Constitutional Advisory Committee

Mar 21th

Five opposition parties submit an impeachment motion against Acting Prime Minister Choi Sang-mok to the National Assembly

Launch of the Korea-U.S. Parliamentary Union (Mar 10th)

On the afternoon of April 10, National Assembly Speaker Woo Won-shik attended the inaugural meeting of the Korea-U.S. Parliamentary Union. The Union was formed in line with the Special Resolution Celebrating the 70th Anniversary of the Korea-U.S. Alliance and Promoting Continued Progress in Bilateral Relations, adopted in February 2023. Over 160 members of the National Assembly have joined the initiative. The launch of the Korea-U.S. Parliamentary Union marks the culmination of efforts that began around the 70th anniversary of the Korea-U.S. Alliance. Representatives Chung Dong-young and Cho Kyung-tae were appointed as inaugural co-chairs, with Kim Young-bae and Cho Jung-hoon serving as floor managers. The bipartisan participation of parliamentary leaders underscores broad political support for the alliance.

For 70 years, the Korea-U.S. alliance has been a cornerstone of South Korea's foreign policy, expanding from security to include economic cooperation, technology, and global collaboration. Given the impact of recent U.S. policy changes on South Korea's economy, continued exchanges between governments, businesses, and legislatures are crucial.

As the new U.S. administration implements its policies, the launch of the Korea-U.S. Parliamentary Union is highly significant. With the government declaring a 'full-scale trade campaign' and businesses sending economic delegations, the National Assembly must support and strengthen these efforts.

The establishment of the Korea-U.S. Parliamentary Union is seen as crucial in strengthening the Korea-U.S. alliance. In challenging times, parliamentary diplomacy plays a key role, and bipartisan cooperation is essential for gaining international trust. It is believed that the union will foster greater communication and collaboration between lawmakers from both countries.

Among the attendees were Kwon Young-se, Chairman of the People Power Party's Emergency Committee; Park Chan-dae, Floor Leader of the Democratic Party of Korea; Minister of Foreign Affairs Cho Tae-yul; Minister of Trade, Industry, and Energy Ahn Duk-geun; Joseph Yun, Charge d'Affaires at the U.S. Embassy in Korea; Professor Jeon Jae-seong of Seoul National University; and members and officials of the Korea-U.S. Parliamentary Union.



Picture of Launch of the Korea-U.S. Parliamentary Union (Mar 10th)

Resolution Supporting the ROK-U.S. Alliance (Mar 11th)

The Korean Peninsula is at a critical crossroads amid rapidly shifting international dynamics. North Korea's growing nuclear and missile capabilities, along with the deepening military cooperation between North Korea and Russia, present a serious threat to the security of the region. Security is closely linked to economic stability, which in turn affects the livelihoods of the people. Given that an unstable security environment breeds uncertainty for citizens, it is essential that the National Assembly and government respond swiftly and cohesively to address this challenge.

The ROK-U.S. Alliance, forged through the blood and sacrifice in the fight against North Korea's illegal invasion on June 25, 1950, has been a driving force behind South Korea's democracy and economic growth over the past 70 years.

Built on shared values such as democracy, market economy, human rights, and the rule of law, this alliance has been instrumental in advancing the Republic of Korea. Additionally, the alliance has grown into a key pillar for maintaining peace and stability not only on the Korean Peninsula and in Northeast Asia, but also across the Indo-Pacific region and globally. It has evolved from a security alliance into a comprehensive global strategic partnership.

In light of these developments, the National Assembly of the Republic of Korea resolves to strengthen the combined defense posture of the ROK and U.S. to reinforce peace on the Korean Peninsula, work towards denuclearization, and expand cooperation in emerging security areas such as cyber defense and space.

Key Resolutions:

1. The National Assembly of the Republic of Korea reaffirms that the ROK-U.S. Alliance is the foundation of peace on the Korean Peninsula and a key pillar for peace and prosperity in Northeast Asia, the Indo-Pacific region, and across the world.
2. The National Assembly of the Republic of Korea resolves to strengthen the ROK-U.S. Alliance and actively support efforts for peace on the Korean Peninsula.
3. The National Assembly of the Republic of Korea welcomes the inauguration of Donald Trump as the 47th President of the United States and the beginning of his new administration. It also supports efforts and policies to strengthen the ROK-U.S. Alliance across all areas, including trade, investment, economic security, energy, artificial intelligence, space, nuclear energy, and shipbuilding.
4. The National Assembly of the Republic of Korea looks forward to continued efforts by the Republic of Korea and the United States, based on their strong alliance, to work together for peace and stability on the Korean Peninsula, in Northeast Asia, the Indo-Pacific region, and globally. In particular, it supports the joint efforts of both countries toward the denuclearization of North Korea, a key goal of the international community, and commits to actively supporting these efforts.
5. The National Assembly of the Republic of Korea greatly appreciates the contributions of the 2.6 million Korean Americans, who have played a vital role in strengthening the ties of prosperity between the Republic of Korea and the United States.

Proposal of Alternatives

On January 21, 2025, Representative Kim Byung-joo introduced the "Resolution in Support of the ROK-U.S. Alliance for Peace on the Korean Peninsula," which was presented at the 1st Foreign Affairs and Unification Committee meeting of the 422nd National Assembly (Special Session) on February 26, 2025. After discussions, reviews, and debates, the bill was referred to the Subcommittee on Legislation. On February 6, 2025, Representative Kim Gunn introduced the "Resolution in Support of the Continued Development of a Strong ROK-U.S. Alliance," which was directly referred to the Subcommittee on Legislation on February 26, 2025, in accordance with Article 58, Section 4 of the National Assembly Act.

Reason for Proposal

On October 1, 1953, the Republic of Korea and the United States signed the Mutual Defense Treaty to ensure peace and security. Forged in sacrifice, the ROK-U.S. Alliance has grown over the past 70 years into a vital pillar for peace and prosperity, built on shared values such as liberal democracy, market economy, human rights, and the rule of law. This alliance has been essential in securing peace on the Korean Peninsula, in Northeast Asia, the Indo-Pacific region, and across the global community. With the inauguration of Donald Trump as the 47th President of the United States, there is a need to further strengthen the strategic partnership between the Republic of Korea and the United States, deepening mutually beneficial cooperation in areas such as economic security, advanced technology, energy, and defense.

After reviewing the resolutions at the 1st Legislation Subcommittee of the 423rd National Assembly (Special Session) on March 6, 2025, it was decided not to submit them separately to the plenary session. Instead, the contents of the resolutions were consolidated and adjusted to be proposed as an alternative by our committee.

At the 1st Foreign Affairs and Unification Committee meeting of the 423rd National Assembly (Special Session) on March 11, 2025, the Legislation Subcommittee reviewed the two resolutions and decided not to send them separately to the plenary session. Instead, the committee agreed to propose the alternative prepared by the Subcommittee as the committee's official proposal.

Recognizing that the continued strengthening of the ROK-U.S. alliance benefits not only the shared interests of both countries but also contributes to peace and prosperity on the Korean Peninsula and around the world, the National Assembly of the Republic of Korea seeks to reaffirm the importance of the alliance and actively support the deepening of cooperation between the two nations through this resolution.