

118TH CONGRESS  
1ST SESSION

# H. R. 6034

To criminalize stalking using an unauthorized geotracking device, modify the 10-year marriage rule relating to spouse's and surviving spouse's insurance benefits in cases of domestic violence, ensure that healthcare providers can assist survivors of domestic violence, provide additional housing protections for survivors of domestic violence, and for other purposes.

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## IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

OCTOBER 24, 2023

Mrs. SYKES introduced the following bill

OCTOBER 25, 2023

Referred to the Committee on the Judiciary, and in addition to the Committees on Ways and Means, and Financial Services, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned

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## A BILL

To criminalize stalking using an unauthorized geotracking device, modify the 10-year marriage rule relating to spouse's and surviving spouse's insurance benefits in cases of domestic violence, ensure that healthcare providers can assist survivors of domestic violence, provide additional housing protections for survivors of domestic violence, and for other purposes.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*  
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

1 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

2 This Act may be cited as the “Safer Homes and  
3 Families Act”.

4 **SEC. 2. STALKING PENALTY.**

5 Section 2261A of title 18, United States Code, is  
6 amended—

7 (1) by striking “Whoever” and inserting “(a)  
8 IN GENERAL.—Whoever”;

9 (2) by inserting after “uses the mail,” the fol-  
10 lowing: “uses an unauthorized geotracking device”;  
11 and

12 (3) by adding at the end the following:

13 “(b) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

14 “(1) The term ‘geotracking device’ means an  
15 electronic or mechanical device that permits a person  
16 to remotely determine or track the position and  
17 movement of another person.

18 “(2) The term ‘unauthorized’ means, with re-  
19 spect to a geotracking device, that the person on  
20 whom the geotracking device is being used has not  
21 consented to such use or otherwise revoked consent  
22 to such use.”.

1 **SEC. 3. MODIFICATION OF 10-YEAR MARRIAGE RULE IN**  
2 **CASES OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE.**

3 (a) IN GENERAL.—Section 216(d) of the Social Secu-  
4 rity Act (42 U.S.C. 416(d)) is amended by adding at the  
5 end the following:

6 “(9)(A) In the case of a divorced woman de-  
7 scribed in paragraph (1) or (2) or a divorced man  
8 described in paragraph (4) or (5) who provides to  
9 the Commissioner of Social Security a finding made  
10 by a court of law that the divorced woman or di-  
11 vorced man was the victim of domestic violence com-  
12 mitted by the spouse during the course of the mar-  
13 riage, such paragraph as may be applicable with re-  
14 spect to such divorced woman or divorced man shall  
15 be applied for purposes of this title by substituting  
16 ‘5 years’ for ‘10 years’.

17 “(B) For purposes of subparagraph (A), the  
18 term ‘domestic violence’ has the meaning given such  
19 term in section 40002(a) of the Violence Against  
20 Women Act of 1994.”.

21 (b) TERMINATION OF WIFE’S INSURANCE BENE-  
22 FITS.—Section 202(b) of the Social Security Act (42  
23 U.S.C. 402(b)) is amended by adding at the end the fol-  
24 lowing:

25 “(5) In the case of any divorced wife who provides  
26 to the Commissioner of Social Security a finding made by

1 a court of law that the divorced wife was the victim of  
2 domestic violence (as defined in section 216(d)(9)(B))  
3 committed by the spouse during the course of the mar-  
4 riage, clause (ii) of paragraph (1)(G) shall be applied by  
5 substituting ‘5 years’ for ‘10 years’.”.

6 (c) **TERMINATION OF HUSBAND’S INSURANCE BENE-**  
7 **FITS.**—Section 202(c) of the Social Security Act (42  
8 U.S.C. 402(c)) is amended by adding at the end the fol-  
9 lowing:

10 “(5) In the case of any divorced husband who pro-  
11 vides to the Commissioner of Social Security a finding  
12 made by a court of law that the divorced husband was  
13 the victim of domestic violence (as defined in section  
14 216(d)(9)(B)) committed by the spouse, clause (ii) of  
15 paragraph (1)(G) shall be applied by substituting ‘5 years’  
16 for ‘10 years’.”.

17 (d) **EFFECTIVE DATE.**—The amendments made by  
18 this section shall apply with respect to monthly insurance  
19 benefits for months beginning at least 18 months after  
20 the date of enactment of this Act.

21 **SEC. 4. DEMONSTRATION PROGRAM ON TRAUMA-IN-**  
22 **FORMED, VICTIM-CENTERED TRAINING FOR**  
23 **HEALTHCARE PROVIDERS.**

24 (a) **IN GENERAL.**—Subtitle Q of title IV of the Vio-  
25 lent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act of 1994 (34

1 U.S.C. 12513 et seq.) is amended by adding at the end  
2 the following:

3 **“SEC. 41702. DEMONSTRATION PROGRAM ON TRAUMA-IN-**  
4 **FORMED, VICTIM-CENTERED TRAINING FOR**  
5 **HEALTHCARE PROVIDERS.**

6 “(a) DEFINITIONS.—In this section—

7 “(1) the term ‘Attorney General’ means the At-  
8 torney General, acting through the Director of the  
9 Office on Violence Against Women;

10 “(2) the term ‘Secretary’ means the Secretary  
11 of the Department of Health and Human Services;

12 “(3) the term ‘covered individual’ means an in-  
13 dividual who interfaces with victims of domestic vio-  
14 lence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking,  
15 including—

16 “(A) an individual working for or on behalf  
17 of an eligible entity;

18 “(B) an administrator or personnel of a  
19 school, university, or other educational program  
20 or activity (including a campus police officer or  
21 a school resource officer); and

22 “(C) an emergency services employee;

23 “(4) the term ‘eligible entity’ means a facility  
24 as described in paragraph (1), (2), (4), (5), or (6)

1 of section 1624 of the Public Health Service Act (42  
2 U.S.C. 300s-3); and

3 “(5) the term ‘mandatory partner’ means a na-  
4 tional, regional, or local victim services organization  
5 or agency working in collaboration with a facility de-  
6 scribed in paragraph (4).

7 “(b) GRANTS AUTHORIZED.—

8 “(1) IN GENERAL.—The Attorney General, in  
9 consultation with the Secretary, shall award grants  
10 on a competitive basis to eligible entities to collabo-  
11 rate with their mandatory partners to carry out the  
12 demonstration program under this section by imple-  
13 menting evidence-based or promising investigative  
14 policies and practices to incorporate trauma-in-  
15 formed, victim-centered techniques designed to—

16 “(A) prevent re-traumatization of the vic-  
17 tim;

18 “(B) ensure that covered individuals use  
19 evidence-based practices to identify, respond to,  
20 and treat cases of domestic violence, dating vio-  
21 lence, sexual assault, and stalking;

22 “(C) increase collaboration among stake-  
23 holders who are part of the coordinated commu-  
24 nity response to domestic violence, dating vio-  
25 lence, sexual assault, and stalking; and

1           “(D) evaluate the effectiveness of the  
2           training process and content.

3           “(2) AWARD BASIS.—The Attorney General, in  
4           consultation with the Secretary, shall award grants  
5           under this section to multiple eligible entities for use  
6           in a variety of settings and communities, including—

7                   “(A) urban, suburban, Tribal, remote, and  
8                   rural areas;

9                   “(B) college campuses; or

10                   “(C) traditionally underserved commu-  
11                   nities.

12           “(c) USE OF FUNDS.—An eligible entity that receives  
13 a grant under this section shall use the grant to—

14                   “(1) train covered individuals associated with  
15                   the eligible entity to use evidence-based, trauma-in-  
16                   formed, and victim-centered techniques to identify  
17                   and treat individuals who have experienced domestic  
18                   violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking,  
19                   including by—

20                           “(A) customizing treatment approaches to  
21                           ensure a culturally and linguistically appro-  
22                           priate approach to the community being served;

23                           “(B) becoming proficient in understanding  
24                           and responding to complex cases, including

1 cases of domestic violence, dating violence, sex-  
2 ual assault, or stalking—

3 “(i) facilitated by alcohol or drugs;

4 “(ii) involving strangulation;

5 “(iii) committed by a non-stranger;

6 “(iv) committed by an individual of  
7 the same sex as the victim;

8 “(v) involving a victim with a dis-  
9 ability;

10 “(vi) involving a male victim; or

11 “(vii) involving a lesbian, gay, bisex-  
12 ual, or transgender (commonly referred to  
13 as ‘LGBT’) victim;

14 “(C) developing collaborative relationships  
15 between—

16 “(i) healthcare providers, law enforce-  
17 ment officers, and other members of the  
18 response team; and

19 “(ii) the community being served; and

20 “(D) developing an understanding of how  
21 to define, identify, and correctly classify a re-  
22 port of domestic violence, dating violence, sex-  
23 ual assault, or stalking; and

24 “(2) promote the efforts of the eligible entity to  
25 improve the response of covered individuals to do-



1       mestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and  
2       stalking through various communication channels,  
3       such as the website of the eligible entity, social  
4       media, print materials, and community meetings, in  
5       order to ensure that all covered individuals associ-  
6       ated with the eligible entity are aware of those ef-  
7       forts and included in trainings, to the extent prac-  
8       ticable.

9       “(d) DEMONSTRATION PROGRAM TRAININGS ON  
10      TRAUMA-INFORMED, VICTIM-CENTERED APPROACHES.—

11             “(1) IN GENERAL.—The Attorney General, in  
12      consultation with the Secretary, shall identify  
13      trainings for covered individuals, in existence as of  
14      the date on which the Attorney General begins to so-  
15      licit applications for grants under this section,  
16      that—

17             “(A) employ a trauma-informed, victim-  
18      centered approach to domestic violence, dating  
19      violence, sexual assault, and stalking; and

20             “(B) focus on the fundamentals of—

21                 “(i) trauma responses;

22                 “(ii) the impact of trauma on victims  
23      of domestic violence, dating violence, sex-  
24      ual assault, and stalking; and

1           “(iii) techniques for effectively treat-  
2           ing the medical consequences of domestic  
3           violence, dating violence, sexual assault,  
4           and stalking.

5           “(2) SELECTION.—An eligible entity that re-  
6           ceives a grant under this section shall select one or  
7           more of the approaches employed by a training iden-  
8           tified under paragraph (1) to test at the eligible en-  
9           tity.

10          “(e) EVALUATIONS.—

11           “(1) IN GENERAL.—The Attorney General and  
12           the Secretary, in consultation with the Director of  
13           the National Institute of Justice, shall require each  
14           eligible entity that receives a grant under this sec-  
15           tion to identify a research partner, preferably a local  
16           research partner, to—

17           “(A) design a system for generating and  
18           collecting the appropriate data to facilitate an  
19           independent process or impact evaluation of the  
20           use of the grant funds;

21           “(B) periodically conduct an evaluation de-  
22           scribed in subparagraph (A); and

23           “(C) periodically make publicly available,  
24           during the grant period—

1                   “(i) preliminary results of the evalua-  
2                   tions conducted under subparagraph (B);  
3                   and

4                   “(ii) recommendations for improving  
5                   the use of the grant funds.

6                   “(2) GAO REPORT.—Not later than three years  
7                   after the date of the enactment of this section, the  
8                   Comptroller General of the United States shall sub-  
9                   mit to the Committees on Ways and Means, Energy  
10                  and Commerce, and Judiciary of the House of Rep-  
11                  resentatives and the Committees on Judiciary and  
12                  on Finance of the Senate a report summarizing the  
13                  implementation of this section.

14                  “(f) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There  
15                  are authorized to be appropriated to the Attorney General  
16                  \$10,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2024 through 2028  
17                  to carry out this section.”.

18                  (b) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of contents  
19                  for the Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act  
20                  of 1994 (34 U.S.C. 10101 note) is amended by inserting  
21                  after the item related to section 41701 the following:

                  “41702. Demonstration program on trauma-informed, victim-centered training  
                  for healthcare providers.”.

1 **SEC. 5. PROHIBITION ON THE IMPOSITION OF FEES FOR**  
2 **EARLY LEASE TERMINATION.**

3 Section 41411 of the Violence Against Women Act  
4 of 1994 (34 U.S.C. 12491) is amended by adding at the  
5 end the following:

6 “(h) PROHIBITION ON THE IMPOSITION OF FEES FOR  
7 EARLY LEASE TERMINATION.—

8 “(1) VOLUNTARY EXIT.—An applicant for or  
9 tenant of housing assisted under a covered housing  
10 program may voluntarily exit a lease for housing  
11 earlier than the end date of such lease on the basis  
12 that the applicant or tenant has been a victim of do-  
13 mestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or  
14 stalking.

15 “(2) FEE PROHIBITION.—Notwithstanding any  
16 lease agreement, an applicant or tenant described in  
17 paragraph (1) may not be charged a fee for exiting  
18 a lease for housing earlier than the end date of such  
19 lease on the basis described in paragraph (1).”.

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