

118TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 6168

To amend the Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act of 1994 to ensure that healthcare providers can assist survivors of domestic violence, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

NOVEMBER 1, 2023

Mrs. SYKES introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on the Judiciary

A BILL

To amend the Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act of 1994 to ensure that healthcare providers can assist 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,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the or the “Better Care
5 For Domestic Violence Survivors Act”.

1 **SEC. 2. DEMONSTRATION PROGRAM ON TRAUMA-IN-**
2 **FORMED, VICTIM-CENTERED TRAINING FOR**
3 **HEALTHCARE PROVIDERS.**

4 (a) IN GENERAL.—Subtitle Q of title IV of the Vio-
5 lent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act of 1994 (34
6 U.S.C. 12513 et seq.) is amended by adding at the end
7 the following:

8 **“SEC. 41702. DEMONSTRATION PROGRAM ON TRAUMA-IN-**
9 **FORMED, VICTIM-CENTERED TRAINING FOR**
10 **HEALTHCARE PROVIDERS.**

11 “(a) DEFINITIONS.—In this section—

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

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

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

21 “(A) an individual working for or on behalf
22 of an eligible entity;

23 “(B) an administrator or personnel of a
24 school, university, or other educational program
25 or activity (including a campus police officer or
26 a school resource officer); and

1 “(C) an emergency services employee;

2 “(4) the term ‘eligible entity’ means a facility
3 as described in paragraph (1), (2), (4), (5), or (6)
4 of section 1624 of the Public Health Service Act (42
5 U.S.C. 300s–3); and

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

10 “(b) GRANTS AUTHORIZED.—

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

19 “(A) prevent re-traumatization of the vic-
20 tim;

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

1 “(C) increase collaboration among stake-
2 holders who are part of the coordinated commu-
3 nity response to domestic violence, dating vio-
4 lence, sexual assault, and stalking; and

5 “(D) evaluate the effectiveness of the
6 training process and content.

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

11 “(A) urban, suburban, Tribal, remote, and
12 rural areas;

13 “(B) college campuses; or

14 “(C) traditionally underserved commu-
15 nities.

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

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

1 “(A) customizing treatment approaches to
2 ensure a culturally and linguistically appro-
3 priate approach to the community being served;

4 “(B) becoming proficient in understanding
5 and responding to complex cases, including
6 cases of domestic violence, dating violence, sex-
7 ual assault, or stalking—

8 “(i) facilitated by alcohol or drugs;

9 “(ii) involving strangulation;

10 “(iii) committed by a non-stranger;

11 “(iv) committed by an individual of
12 the same sex as the victim;

13 “(v) involving a victim with a dis-
14 ability;

15 “(vi) involving a male victim; or

16 “(vii) involving a lesbian, gay, bisex-
17 ual, or transgender (commonly referred to
18 as ‘LGBT’) victim;

19 “(C) developing collaborative relationships
20 between—

21 “(i) healthcare providers, law enforce-
22 ment officers, and other members of the
23 response team; and

24 “(ii) the community being served; and

1 “(D) developing an understanding of how
2 to define, identify, and correctly classify a re-
3 port of domestic violence, dating violence, sex-
4 ual assault, or stalking; and

5 “(2) promote the efforts of the eligible entity to
6 improve the response of covered individuals to do-
7 mestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and
8 stalking through various communication channels,
9 such as the website of the eligible entity, social
10 media, print materials, and community meetings, in
11 order to ensure that all covered individuals associ-
12 ated with the eligible entity are aware of those ef-
13 forts and included in trainings, to the extent prac-
14 ticable.

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

17 “(1) IN GENERAL.—The Attorney General, in
18 consultation with the Secretary, shall identify
19 trainings for covered individuals, in existence as of
20 the date on which the Attorney General begins to so-
21 licit applications for grants under this section,
22 that—

23 “(A) employ a trauma-informed, victim-
24 centered approach to domestic violence, dating
25 violence, sexual assault, and stalking; and

1 “(B) focus on the fundamentals of—

2 “(i) trauma responses;

3 “(ii) the impact of trauma on victims
4 of domestic violence, dating violence, sex-
5 ual assault, and stalking; and

6 “(iii) techniques for effectively treat-
7 ing the medical consequences of domestic
8 violence, dating violence, sexual assault,
9 and stalking.

10 “(2) SELECTION.—An eligible entity that re-
11 ceives a grant under this section shall select one or
12 more of the approaches employed by a training iden-
13 tified under paragraph (1) to test at the eligible en-
14 tity.

15 “(e) EVALUATIONS.—

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

22 “(A) design a system for generating and
23 collecting the appropriate data to facilitate an
24 independent process or impact evaluation of the
25 use of the grant funds;

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

3 “(C) periodically make publicly available,
4 during the grant period—

5 “(i) preliminary results of the evalua-
6 tions conducted under subparagraph (B);
7 and

8 “(ii) recommendations for improving
9 the use of the grant funds.

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

18 “(f) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There
19 are authorized to be appropriated to the Attorney General
20 \$10,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2024 through 2028
21 to carry out this section.”.

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

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

