

118TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 3618

To establish a grant program to encourage schools to conduct independent facility security risk assessments and make hard security improvements, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

MAY 23, 2023

Mr. WILLIAMS of Texas (for himself and Mr. MOSKOWITZ) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Education and the Workforce, and in addition to the Committee on the Judiciary, 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

A BILL

To establish a grant program to encourage schools to conduct independent facility security risk assessments and make hard security improvements, 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 “Safer Schools Act of
5 2023”.

1 **SEC. 2. PILOT PROGRAM FOR GRANTS FOR INDEPENDENT**
2 **FACILITY SECURITY RISK ASSESSMENTS AND**
3 **HARD SECURITY IMPROVEMENTS.**

4 (a) ESTABLISHMENT.—Not later than 120 days after
5 the date of the enactment of this Act the Attorney General
6 shall establish a pilot program (hereinafter referred to as
7 the “pilot program”) to issue grants pursuant to sub-
8 sections (b) and (c), including releasing guidelines and ap-
9 plications with respect to such grant programs.

10 (b) INDEPENDENT FACILITY SECURITY RISK AS-
11 SESSMENT GRANTS.—

12 (1) IN GENERAL.—Beginning not later than
13 180 days after the date of enactment of this section,
14 the Attorney General shall award grants to public
15 schools to have independent facility security risk as-
16 sessments performed.

17 (2) APPLICATION.—

18 (A) IN GENERAL.—To be eligible to receive
19 a grant under this section, a public school shall
20 submit to the Attorney General an application
21 at such time, in such manner, and containing
22 such information as the Attorney General may
23 require, including—

24 (i) the size of the school;

25 (ii) a comprehensive report on the fi-
26 nancial state of the school, including any

1 Federal, State, or local funds used in the
2 school's budget; and

3 (iii) a certification to the Attorney
4 General that the school is unable to cover
5 the cost of an independent facility security
6 risk assessment without the grant awarded
7 under this section.

8 (B) PRIORITY.—The Attorney General, in
9 awarding a grant under this section, shall give
10 priority to applications of public schools that
11 have experienced an event in which an indi-
12 vidual inflicts deadly harm or attempts to inflict
13 deadly harm against multiple individuals.

14 (3) INELIGIBILITY.—

15 (A) IN GENERAL.—A public school shall be
16 ineligible to receive a grant under this section
17 if it—

18 (i) received a grant under this section
19 in the previous 5 fiscal years; or

20 (ii) receives a grant under this section
21 in the same fiscal year.

22 (B) EXCEPTION.—Notwithstanding para-
23 graph (1), in the case that a grant recipient ex-
24periences an event in which an individual in-
25flicts deadly harm or attempts to inflict deadly

1 harm against multiple individuals, such grant
2 recipient shall be eligible to receive an addi-
3 tional grant under this section in the fiscal year
4 after the date of the event.

5 (c) HARD SECURITY IMPROVEMENT GRANTS.—

6 (1) IN GENERAL.—Beginning not later than
7 180 days after the date of enactment of this section,
8 the Attorney General shall award grants to public
9 schools for the purpose of making hard security im-
10 provements to schools.

11 (2) APPLICATION.—

12 (A) IN GENERAL.—To be eligible to receive
13 a grant under this section, a public school shall
14 submit to the Attorney General an application
15 at such time, in such manner, and containing
16 such information as the Attorney General may
17 require, which application shall include—

18 (i) the size of the school;

19 (ii) a comprehensive report on the fi-
20 nancial state of the school, including any
21 Federal, State, or local funds used in the
22 school's budget;

23 (iii) a comprehensive description of
24 previous improvements made to the school

1 meant to address school security related
2 vulnerabilities;

3 (iv) the specific products and services
4 that will be purchased with the grant
5 funds and an estimate of such costs and
6 services; and

7 (v) the results of the school's most re-
8 cent independent facility security risk as-
9 sessment.

10 (B) PRIORITY.—The Attorney General, in
11 awarding a grant under this section, shall give
12 priority to applications of schools that have ex-
13 perienced an event in which an individual in-
14 flicts deadly harm or attempts to inflict deadly
15 harm against multiple individuals.

16 (3) INELIGIBILITY.—

17 (A) IN GENERAL.—A public school shall be
18 ineligible to receive a grant under this section
19 if—

20 (i) a public school received a grant
21 under this section in the previous 5 fiscal
22 years; or

23 (ii) a public school receives a grant
24 under this section in the same fiscal year.

1 (B) EXCEPTION.—Notwithstanding para-
2 graph (1), in the case that a grant recipient ex-
3periences an event in which an individual in-
4flicts deadly harm or attempts to inflict deadly
5harm against multiple individuals, such grant
6recipient shall be eligible to receive an addi-
7tional grant under this section in any fiscal
8year after the date on which the event occurred.

9 (4) MATCHING FUNDS.—

10 (A) IN GENERAL.—The Federal share of a
11 grant received under this subsection may not
12 exceed 50 percent of the hard security improve-
13ment costs.

14 (B) WAIVER.—The Attorney General may
15 waive in whole or in part, the matching require-
16ment under paragraph (1) in the case that the
17 recipient has a financial need for such waiver.

18 (5) GRANT CONDITIONS.—A recipient of a
19 grant under this section shall—

20 (A) use the grant to make hard security
21 improvements identified as necessary by the
22 most recent independent facility security risk
23 assessment;

24 (B) in the case that a panic alarm is not
25 installed or operable according to the inde-

1 pendent facility risk assessment, use the grant
2 for the installation of at least 1 panic alarm for
3 use in a school security emergency, including a
4 non-fire evacuation, lockdown, or active shooter
5 situation, which alarm—

6 (i) shall be directly linked to the local
7 law enforcement agency that is closest in
8 proximity to the grant recipient;

9 (ii) shall immediately transmit a sig-
10 nal or message to such law enforcement
11 agency upon activation; and

12 (iii) shall not be audible within the
13 public school building;

14 (C) before entering into a contract with a
15 vendor, obtain written confirmation from the
16 law enforcement agency or entity that con-
17 ducted the independent facility security risk as-
18 sessment that the improvement will mitigate a
19 vulnerability identified in the independent facil-
20 ity security risk assessment; and

21 (D) ensure that hard security improve-
22 ments comply with local building code require-
23 ments and standards.

24 (d) INFORMATION DISSEMINATION.—

1 (1) IN GENERAL.—The Attorney General shall
2 disseminate to each local educational agency in the
3 United States information about the availability of
4 grants under this section.

5 (2) EVENT NOTICE.—Not later than 30 days
6 after an event in which an individual inflicts deadly
7 harm or attempts to inflict deadly harm against
8 multiple individuals occurs in a public school, the
9 Director shall contact verbally the head of such pub-
10 lic school to provide notice of priority eligibility for
11 grants under this section and to offer technical as-
12 sistance in navigating the application process.

13 (e) REPORTS.—

14 (1) GRANT RECIPIENT REPORT.—Not later
15 than one year after receiving a grant under sub-
16 section (b) or (c), a recipient shall submit to the At-
17 torney General—

18 (A) a copy of the results of each security
19 assessment with how many vulnerabilities were
20 found;

21 (B) a list of each hard improvement made
22 and the percentage of vulnerabilities fixed, in-
23 cluding the percentage of vulnerabilities out-
24 standing; and

1 (C) a list of the number of events in which
2 an individual inflicts deadly harm or attempts
3 to inflict deadly harm against multiple individ-
4 uals, if any, that happened five years before
5 hard security vulnerabilities were fixed or one
6 year after the hard security vulnerabilities were
7 made; and

8 (D) a survey assessing how safe students
9 and facility members feel on the school's cam-
10 pus before hard security improvements were
11 made and one year after they were made.

12 (2) ATTORNEY GENERAL REPORT.—Not later
13 than two years after the date of enactment, and an-
14 nually thereafter, the Attorney General shall submit
15 to appropriate Congressional committees a report on
16 the national state of physical security in schools, in-
17 cluding—

18 (A) the contents of grant recipient reports
19 under paragraph (1);

20 (B) a percentage breakdown of the type of
21 hard security fixes;

22 (C) the percentage of outstanding
23 vulnerabilities remaining;

24 (D) a percentage breakdown of each type
25 of hard security improvements made; and

1 (E) the average percentage of
2 vulnerabilities fixed and average percentage of
3 vulnerabilities outstanding after the hard secu-
4 rity improvements were made.

5 (f) SUNSET.—The pilot program shall terminate on
6 the date that is five years after the date on which the pilot
7 program is established.

8 (g) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

9 (1) APPROPRIATE CONGRESSIONAL COMMIT-
10 TEES.—The term “appropriate congressional com-
11 mittees” means the Committee on the Judiciary and
12 the Committee on Education and the Workforce of
13 the House of Representatives and the Committee on
14 the Judiciary and the Committee on Health, Edu-
15 cation, Labor, and Pensions of the Senate.

16 (2) HARD SECURITY IMPROVEMENTS.—The
17 term “hard security improvements” means improve-
18 ments to the infrastructure of school property perim-
19 eter, parking lot perimeter, building perimeter, en-
20 trance and exit points of the school building, video
21 monitoring equipment, alert notification equipment,
22 the interior and perimeter of the classroom, and any
23 other physical improvements related to camera sys-
24 tems and related hardware, alarm and notification
25 technology, and visitor management technologies

1 deemed eligible for improvement by the Attorney
2 General.

3 (3) INDEPENDENT FACILITY SECURITY RISK AS-
4 SESSMENT.—The term “independent facility security
5 risk assessment” means an assessment that—

6 (A) identifies active shooter and related se-
7 curity vulnerabilities of public schools, consid-
8 ering security factors, including the strength
9 and maintenance levels of the property perim-
10 eter, parking lot perimeter, building perimeter,
11 and classroom and interior perimeter, and the
12 presence of a silent security system signal gen-
13 erated by the manual activation of a device in-
14 tended to signal a life-threatening or emergency
15 situation requiring a response from law enforce-
16 ment; and

17 (B) is conducted by a Federal, State, or
18 local entity determined to be qualified by the
19 Department of Justice’s Bureau of Justice As-
20 sistance.

21 (4) PUBLIC SCHOOL.—The term “public
22 school” means a public elementary school or a public
23 secondary school, including an elementary school or
24 a secondary school that is predominately funded by
25 an Indian tribal government.

1 (h) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—

2 (1) IN GENERAL.—There is authorized to be
3 appropriated to carry about the pilot program—

4 (A) \$100,000,000 for fiscal year one of the
5 pilot program;

6 (B) \$200,000,000 for fiscal year two of the
7 pilot program; and

8 (C) \$300,000,000 for fiscal years three
9 through five of the pilot program.

10 (2) ALLOCATION OF FUNDS.—Any funds au-
11 thorized under paragraph (1) shall be allocated—

12 (A) with 30 percent of any such funds to
13 the grant program under section 2(b); and

14 (B) with 70 percent of any such funds to
15 the grant program under section 2(c).

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