

118TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

S. 1731

To provide grants to enable nonprofit disability organizations to develop training programs that support safe interactions between law enforcement officers and individuals with disabilities and older individuals.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

MAY 18, 2023

Mr. CASEY (for himself, Mr. MORAN, Mrs. GILLIBRAND, Ms. MURKOWSKI, Mr. MARKEY, Mr. MURPHY, Mr. MERKLEY, Mr. MENENDEZ, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Ms. HIRONO, Ms. DUCKWORTH, Mr. VAN HOLLEN, Mr. WHITEHOUSE, and Mr. PADILLA) introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions

A BILL

To provide grants to enable nonprofit disability organizations to develop training programs that support safe interactions between law enforcement officers and individuals with disabilities and older individuals.

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 “Safe Interactions Act
5 of 2023”.

1 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

2 Congress finds the following:

3 (1) Individuals with disabilities are 2.5 times
4 more likely to be victims of violent crime.

5 (2) Individuals with disabilities are 3 times
6 more likely to be victims of a serious crime.

7 (3) Individuals with disabilities make up be-
8 tween one-third and one-half of all individuals killed
9 by law enforcement officers.

10 **SEC. 3. PURPOSE.**

11 The purposes of this Act are to—

12 (1) authorize the Secretary to award competi-
13 tive grants to nonprofit disability organizations to
14 administer enhanced training programs to law en-
15 forcement officers who may encounter or provide
16 services to covered individuals, including—

17 (A) individuals with mental health disabil-
18 ities, including schizophrenia;

19 (B) individuals who are deaf, deaf-blind,
20 hard of hearing, or blind, are autistic, or have
21 other intellectual or developmental disabilities;

22 (C) older individuals with dementia or
23 other cognitive impairments; and

24 (D) individuals with any other disability or
25 chronic health condition;

1 (2) support, not replace, other specialized law
2 enforcement officer training; and

3 (3)(A) increase the awareness, knowledge, and
4 understanding of law enforcement officers about cov-
5 ered individuals and their unique needs and applica-
6 ble Federal civil rights laws;

7 (B) reduce incidences of violence between law
8 enforcement officers and covered individuals;

9 (C) expand the knowledge of law enforcement
10 officers, in areas such as the signs of disabilities,
11 identifying people with disabilities, communicating
12 with people with disabilities, and effective ways to
13 approach covered individuals to minimize situations
14 of risk to—

15 (i) those individuals; and

16 (ii) the law enforcement officers who inter-
17 vene or provide services to those individuals;
18 and

19 (D) increase the knowledge of law enforcement
20 officers of community resources available for covered
21 individuals to ultimately limit interactions with law
22 enforcement officers.

23 **SEC. 4. DEFINITIONS.**

24 In this Act:

1 (1) COVERED GRANT.—The term “covered
2 grant” means a grant awarded under section 5(a).

3 (2) COVERED INDIVIDUAL.—The term “covered
4 individual” means—

5 (A) an older individual; or

6 (B) an individual with a disability.

7 (3) ELIGIBLE ENTITY.—The term “eligible enti-
8 ty” means a nonprofit disability organization that
9 has formed a partnership with a law enforcement
10 agency or a consortium of law enforcement agencies
11 to administer enhanced training programs to law en-
12 forcement officers of the agency or agencies on how
13 to interact with covered individuals.

14 (4) INDIAN TRIBE.—The term “Indian Tribe”
15 has the meaning given the term in section 4 of the
16 Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance
17 Act (25 U.S.C. 5304).

18 (5) INDIVIDUAL WITH A DISABILITY.—The term
19 “individual with a disability” means any individual
20 who has a disability, as defined in section 3 of the
21 Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (42 U.S.C.
22 12102).

23 (6) INITIAL TRAINING PROGRAM.—The term
24 “initial training program” means a mandatory train-

1 ing program offered to new law enforcement officers
2 during their orientation under section 5(d)(1)(A).

3 (7) LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICER.—The term
4 “law enforcement officer” means any officer, agent,
5 or employee of a State, political subdivision of a
6 State, or Indian Tribe—

7 (A) authorized by law or by a government
8 agency to engage in or supervise the prevention,
9 detection, or investigation of any violation of
10 criminal law; or

11 (B) authorized by law to supervise sen-
12 tenced criminal offenders.

13 (8) NONPROFIT DISABILITY ORGANIZATION.—
14 The term “nonprofit disability organization” means
15 a nonprofit organization—

16 (A) that serves covered individuals; and

17 (B)(i) that is operated by a board of which
18 the majority of members are covered individ-
19 uals;

20 (ii) that has an advisory panel of which the
21 majority of members are covered individuals; or

22 (iii) the majority of the employees of which
23 are covered individuals.

24 (9) OLDER INDIVIDUAL.—The term “older indi-
25 vidual” has the meaning given the term in section

1 102 of the Older Americans Act of 1965 (42 U.S.C.
2 3002).

3 (10) PARTNER ACADEMY.—The term “partner
4 academy”, with respect to an eligible entity that re-
5 ceives a covered grant, means a law enforcement
6 training academy with which the eligible entity part-
7 ners to administer an initial training program, as
8 described in section 5(b)(1).

9 (11) PARTNER AGENCY.—The term “partner
10 agency”, with respect to an eligible entity that re-
11 ceives a covered grant, means the law enforcement
12 agency with which the eligible entity partners, or
13 that is a member of a consortium with which the eli-
14 gible entity partners, to administer enhanced train-
15 ing programs to law enforcement officers of the
16 agency on how to interact with covered individuals.

17 (12) REFRESHER TRAINING PROGRAM.—The
18 term “refresher training program” means a training
19 program offered to existing law enforcement officers
20 under section 5(d)(1)(B).

21 (13) SECRETARY.—The term “Secretary”
22 means the Secretary of Health and Human Services.

23 (14) STATE.—

24 (A) STATE.—The term “State” includes,
25 in addition to the several States of the United

1 States, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, the
2 District of Columbia, Guam, American Samoa,
3 the United States Virgin Islands, the Common-
4 wealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, and
5 the Freely Associated States.

6 (B) FREELY ASSOCIATED STATES.—The
7 term “Freely Associated States” means the Re-
8 public of the Marshall Islands, the Federated
9 States of Micronesia, and the Republic of
10 Palau.

11 **SEC. 5. GRANT PROGRAM.**

12 (a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall award com-
13 petitive grants to nonprofit disability organizations to ad-
14 minister enhanced training programs to law enforcement
15 officers who may encounter or provide services to covered
16 individuals.

17 (b) APPLICATION.—An eligible entity seeking a cov-
18 ered grant shall submit to the Secretary an application
19 that—

20 (1)(A) identifies a law enforcement training
21 academy with which the eligible entity will partner
22 to administer an initial training program; and

23 (B) includes a memorandum of understanding
24 entered into between the eligible entity and the law
25 enforcement training academy;

1 (2) describes the training program curriculum,
2 which shall include training on how to interact with,
3 identify, approach, and communicate with covered
4 individuals that is provided, as of the date of sub-
5 mission of the application—

6 (A) by the partner academy to new law en-
7 forcement officers; or

8 (B) by any partner agency to existing law
9 enforcement officers;

10 (3) describes the learning objectives of the
11 training programs that the eligible entity will admin-
12 ister using the grant;

13 (4) describes the activities that will be carried
14 out under the grant;

15 (5) includes a timeline of the activities de-
16 scribed in paragraph (4); and

17 (6) demonstrates expertise in training related to
18 covered individuals.

19 (c) PREFERENCES.—In awarding covered grants, the
20 Secretary shall ensure—

21 (1) geographic diversity of grant recipients, in-
22 cluding grant recipients that serve rural localities;
23 and

24 (2) that the training funded by the grant is
25 provided to multiple levels of law enforcement agen-

1 cies, including local, county, State, and Tribal agen-
2 cies.

3 (d) USE OF FUNDS.—

4 (1) MANDATORY USES.—An eligible entity that
5 receives a covered grant shall use the grant funds
6 to—

7 (A) modify the training provided by the
8 partner academy to new law enforcement offi-
9 cers of each partner agency so that the acad-
10 emy provides not fewer than 8 hours of training
11 on topics such as how to interact with, identify,
12 approach, and communicate with covered indi-
13 viduals and applicable Federal civil rights laws,
14 including not fewer than 4 hours of interactive
15 learning taught by covered individuals; and

16 (B) develop and implement an enhanced
17 training program for existing law enforcement
18 officers of each partner agency on safe, effec-
19 tive, and respectful interactions with covered in-
20 dividuals—

21 (i) that includes—

22 (I) awareness of and education
23 about covered individuals, including—

1 (aa) individuals with mental
2 health disabilities, including
3 schizophrenia;

4 (bb) individuals who are
5 deaf, deaf-blind, hard of hearing,
6 or blind, are autistic, or have
7 other intellectual or develop-
8 mental disabilities;

9 (cc) older individuals with
10 dementia or other cognitive im-
11 pairments; and

12 (dd) individuals with any
13 other disability or chronic health
14 condition;

15 (II) escalation avoidance and de-
16 escalation techniques to be used when
17 interacting with covered individuals,
18 including procedures a law enforce-
19 ment officer should follow to ensure
20 the health and safety of a covered in-
21 dividual; and

22 (III) communication strategies to
23 be used when interacting with covered
24 individuals, including individuals who
25 do not use speech to communicate;

- 1 (ii) that utilizes—
2 (I) instructors who are covered
3 individuals; or
4 (II) guest instructors or speakers
5 who are covered individuals; and
6 (iii) in which each law enforcement of-
7 ficer participates not less frequently than 4
8 hours every year.

9 (2) OPTIONAL USES.—An eligible entity that re-
10 ceives a covered grant may use the grant funds to—

11 (A) expand an existing training program
12 regarding topics such as interacting with, iden-
13 tifying, approaching, and communicating with
14 covered individuals that was provided to law en-
15 forcement officers by a nonprofit disability or-
16 ganization in conjunction with the partner
17 academy or a partner agency before the eligible
18 entity received the grant;

19 (B) reimburse staff members of the eligible
20 entity for mileage and travel time expended to
21 attend an initial training program or refresher
22 training program occurring in person or online;

23 (C) develop a model of training that uti-
24 lizes volunteer instructors, except that the eligi-

1 ble entity shall pay any instructor, including a
2 guest instructor, who is a covered individual;

3 (D) acquire a computer system or software
4 needed for the training programs; or

5 (E) support the paid participation of indi-
6 viduals with disabilities and their family mem-
7 bers as advisors.

8 (e) SUPPLEMENT, NOT SUPPLANT.—An eligible enti-
9 ty that receives a covered grant shall use the grant funds
10 to supplement, and not supplant, any funds that would,
11 in the absence of the grant funds, be made available from
12 a State, political subdivision of a State, or Indian Tribe
13 for the activities described in subsection (d).

14 (f) ADVISORY COUNCIL.—

15 (1) IN GENERAL.—An eligible entity that re-
16 ceives a covered grant shall establish an advisory
17 council composed of 15 members to advise the eligi-
18 ble entity on activities carried out using the grant.

19 (2) MEMBERSHIP.—An advisory council estab-
20 lished under paragraph (1) shall—

21 (A) be composed of—

22 (i) 1 representative of the eligible en-
23 tity who is a covered individual and shall
24 serve as chair of the advisory council;

- 1 (ii) 1 representative of the State law
2 enforcement training academy or law en-
3 forcement agency for the State that the eli-
4 gible entity serves, who shall serve as vice
5 chair of the advisory council;
- 6 (iii) 3 representatives of community-
7 based organizations that support individ-
8 uals with disabilities, not fewer than 2 of
9 whom have a disability;
- 10 (iv) 2 representatives of community-
11 based organizations that support older
12 adults;
- 13 (v) 2 State officials or their designees;
- 14 (vi) 1 representative of an organiza-
15 tion providing victim services;
- 16 (vii) 1 representative of a State public
17 safety agency;
- 18 (viii) 3 members of the public with
19 knowledge of individuals with disabilities
20 and older adults with cognitive impair-
21 ment, including not fewer than 2 self-advo-
22 cates or family members of a covered indi-
23 vidual; and

1 (ix) 1 active local or State law en-
2 forcement officer representing a labor or
3 representative organization; and

4 (B) include a majority of representation
5 from racial and ethnic minority communities.

6 (3) DUTIES.—An advisory council established
7 under paragraph (1) shall—

8 (A) advise the eligible entity and provide
9 general oversight of grant activities carried out
10 by the eligible entity, including development of
11 the training curriculum and implementation of
12 the training programs; and

13 (B) provide the advisory council with rec-
14 ommendations for the sustainability and expan-
15 sion of the training programs, such as the de-
16 velopment of a train-the-trainer model.

17 (g) ANNUAL REPORT.—

18 (1) REPORT TO SECRETARY BY ELIGIBLE ENTI-
19 TIES.—Not later than 1 year after receiving a cov-
20 ered grant, and each year thereafter for the duration
21 of the grant period, an eligible entity that receives
22 a covered grant shall submit the following informa-
23 tion to the Secretary with respect to the preceding
24 year:

1 (A) The number of individuals who bene-
2 fitted from the training programs provided by
3 the eligible entity using grant funds, includ-
4 ing—

5 (i) the number of individuals who
6 were trained through the training pro-
7 grams, including the total number of new
8 law enforcement officers who participated
9 in the initial training program and existing
10 law enforcement officers who participated
11 in the refresher training program; and

12 (ii) the estimated number of individ-
13 uals who were impacted by the training
14 programs.

15 (B) Demographic data, including age, sex,
16 and race, for the law enforcement officers who
17 received the training.

18 (C) The number of partner agencies that
19 participated in the training programs.

20 (D) Each partner law enforcement agency,
21 including the city and State in which the head-
22 quarters and each local office of the agency are
23 located, and the result of that partnership.

24 (E) Any recommendations for improving
25 the grant program carried out under this Act.

1 (2) REPORT TO CONGRESS AND THE ATTORNEY
2 GENERAL BY THE SECRETARY.—Not later than 2
3 years after the date of enactment of this Act, and
4 each year thereafter, the Secretary shall submit a re-
5 port on the grant program carried out under this
6 Act, with respect to the preceding year, to—

7 (A) the Attorney General;

8 (B) the Committee on the Judiciary of the
9 Senate;

10 (C) the Committee on Appropriations of
11 the Senate;

12 (D) the Special Committee on Aging of the
13 Senate;

14 (E) the Committee on Health, Education,
15 Labor, and Pensions of the Senate;

16 (F) the Committee on the Judiciary of the
17 House of Representatives; and

18 (G) the Committee on Appropriations of
19 the House of Representatives.

20 (h) EVALUATION.—

21 (1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall use not
22 more than 2 percent of the amounts made available
23 under section 6 for administrative purposes and for
24 an evaluation of the grant program carried out
25 under this Act.

1 (2) INDEPENDENT EVALUATOR.—The Secretary
2 shall enter into a contract with a third-party entity
3 that is unrelated to any recipient of a covered grant
4 to carry out the evaluation under paragraph (1).

5 (3) CONTENTS.—In carrying out the evaluation
6 under paragraph (1), the third-party entity con-
7 tracted under paragraph (2) shall report to the Sec-
8 retary and the Attorney General on—

9 (A) the demographic characteristics of the
10 population served by the training conducted by
11 eligible entities using covered grants; and

12 (B) any change in the occurrence of vio-
13 lence in the communities served by training de-
14 scribed in subparagraph (A).

15 **SEC. 6. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.**

16 There is authorized to be appropriated \$100,000,000
17 for each of fiscal years 2023 through 2026 to carry out
18 this Act.

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