

114TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

S. 2418

To authorize the Secretary of Homeland Security to establish university labs for student-developed technology-based solutions for countering on-line recruitment of violent extremists.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

DECEMBER 17, 2015

Mr. BOOKER (for himself and Mr. JOHNSON) introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs

A BILL

To authorize the Secretary of Homeland Security to establish university labs for student-developed technology-based solutions for countering online recruitment of violent extremists.

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 “Countering Online Re-
5 cruitment of Violent Extremists Act of 2015”.

6 **SEC. 2. DEFINITIONS.**

7 In this Act:

1 (1) APPROPRIATE CONGRESSIONAL COMMIT-
2 TEES.—The term “appropriate Congressional com-
3 mittees” means the Committee on Homeland Secu-
4 rity and Governmental Affairs of the Senate and the
5 Committee on Homeland Security of the House of
6 Representatives.

7 (2) CENTER FOR HOMELAND SECURITY.—The
8 term “center for homeland security” means a uni-
9 versity-based center the Secretary of Homeland Se-
10 curity designates under section 308(b)(2) of the
11 Homeland Security Act of 2002 (6 U.S.C.
12 188(b)(2)).

13 (3) COUNTERING VIOLENT EXTREMISM.—The
14 terms “countering violent extremism” and “CVE”—

15 (A) mean proactive and relevant actions to
16 counter efforts by extremists to radicalize, re-
17 cruit, and mobilize followers to violence and to
18 address the conditions that allow for violent ex-
19 tremist recruitment and radicalization; and

20 (B) do not include disruptive actions that
21 focus on stopping acts of terrorism by individ-
22 uals who have already subscribed to violence.

23 (4) CVE LAB.—The term “CVE Lab” means a
24 physical space and academic program at a center for
25 homeland security designated for participating stu-

1 dents to develop and test technology-based CVE so-
2 lutions.

3 (5) INSTITUTION OF HIGHER EDUCATION.—The
4 term “institution of higher education” has the
5 meaning given the term in section 101 of the Higher
6 Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1001).

7 (6) PARTICIPATING STUDENT.—The term “par-
8 ticipating student” means a student participating in
9 a CVE Lab.

10 (7) TECHNOLOGY-BASED CVE SOLUTION.—The
11 term “technology-based CVE solution” means an in-
12 strument developed by a participating student under
13 section 5(b)(1) that—

14 (A) appeals to young consumers of online
15 and social media;

16 (B) counters online recruitment of violent
17 extremists or builds resilience against online ex-
18 tremist recruitment amongst participating stu-
19 dents’ peers; and

20 (C) operates on a technological platform or
21 is technological in nature, including social
22 media campaigns and mobile software applica-
23 tions.

24 (8) VIOLENT EXTREMISM.—The term “violent
25 extremism” means ideologically motivated inter-

1 national terrorism or domestic terrorism, as those
2 terms are defined in section 2331 of title 18, United
3 States Code.

4 **SEC. 3. FINDINGS.**

5 Congress finds and declares the following:

6 (1) The ability to rapidly disseminate graphic
7 images and ideas to shape the public narrative
8 makes social media a strategic messaging and re-
9 cruitment mechanism for terrorists, insurgent
10 groups, and governments engaged in conflict.

11 (2) The United States Government and its
12 partners around the world have not been effective in
13 using social media to produce alternative narratives
14 to stem terrorist recruitment through social media.

15 (3) Due to the strategic role the Internet plays
16 in recruitment to terrorist violence, online counter-
17 narratives promoted by non-governmental peers are
18 most likely to directly reach and resonate with indi-
19 viduals who aspire to become foreign fighters or
20 carry out terrorist attacks.

21 (4) There exists youth-led demand for action-
22 oriented solutions to countering violent extremism,
23 as evidenced by the Youth Action Agenda to Prevent
24 Violent Extremism and Promote Peace, which was
25 produced by young activists at the Global Youth

1 Summit Against Violent Extremism on the margins
2 of the 70th United Nations General Assembly meet-
3 ing in New York, on September 28, 2015.

4 (5) The establishment of university-based labs
5 for students to develop technology-based solutions
6 will enable more innovative and effective alternative
7 narratives to counter violent extremist recruitment
8 online.

9 **SEC. 4. ESTABLISHMENT OF CVE LABS.**

10 In carrying out clause (xv) of section 308(b)(2)(B)
11 of the Homeland Security Act of 2002 (6 U.S.C.
12 188(b)(2)(B)), as added by section 7, the Secretary of
13 Homeland Security, acting through the Under Secretary
14 for Science and Technology and in coordination with the
15 office within the Department of Homeland Security re-
16 sponsible for coordinating the CVE efforts of the Depart-
17 ment of Homeland Security, may—

- 18 (1) establish 1 or more CVE Labs; and
19 (2) reprioritize grants to centers for homeland
20 security to fund each CVE Lab.

21 **SEC. 5. FUNCTIONS AND REQUIREMENTS OF CVE LABS.**

22 (a) REQUIREMENTS.—The head of an institution of
23 higher education at which a CVE Lab is established shall
24 ensure that the faculty of the CVE Lab—

1 (1) create a curriculum for participating stu-
2 dents to develop and test technology-based CVE so-
3 lutions that—

4 (A) may be drawn from pre-existing cur-
5 ricula or courses at an institution of higher
6 education;

7 (B) incorporates a CVE orientation pro-
8 gram for students participating in the Lab that
9 is informed by cross-cultural communication
10 issues experienced by CVE practitioners;

11 (C) incorporates technology-based business
12 development curricula; and

13 (D) requires participating students develop
14 a final business plan describing how the tech-
15 nology-based CVE solution would be scaled up
16 for investment and possible deployment by pri-
17 vate sector entities, philanthropic organizations,
18 or Federal, State, local, or tribal agencies;

19 (2) invite Federal Government officials to par-
20 ticipate in the orientation required by paragraph
21 (1)(B);

22 (3) provide each participating student a CVE
23 safety briefing by Federal Government officials dur-
24 ing the program orientation that outlines pre-

1 cautions participating students can take to protect
2 themselves from becoming a target of terrorists; and

3 (4) supervise any deployment of a technology-
4 based CVE solution by a participating student.

5 (b) ADDITIONAL FUNCTIONS OF CVE LABS.—The
6 head of an institution of higher education at which a CVE
7 Lab is established shall ensure that the faculty of the CVE
8 Lab, in coordination with the Department of Homeland
9 Security and other appropriate entities including each
10 CVE Lab—

11 (1) develop a framework for participation and
12 support of other programs that encourage students
13 to develop peer-to-peer solutions for CVE;

14 (2) develop a common inventory of research, in
15 conjunction with other university-based centers for
16 homeland security that establish CVE Labs, on core
17 CVE issues to inform CVE Lab curricula in subse-
18 quent years;

19 (3) analyze social networks to identify individ-
20 uals on social media who are susceptible to recruit-
21 ment to violent extremism and at whom technology-
22 based CVE solutions can be directed, and indicators
23 of susceptibility recruitment to violent extremism;
24 and

1 (4) identify experts in CVE who can apply the
2 technology-based CVE solutions to target individuals
3 who are susceptible to recruitment to violent extre-
4 mism.

5 (c) ADMINISTRATION OF CVE LAB.—The head of an
6 institution of higher education at which a CVE Lab is es-
7 tablished—

8 (1) may determine the department and faculty
9 of the institution of higher education that will be re-
10 sponsible for administering the CVE Lab and have
11 final approval of who will be participating students
12 at the CVE Lab; and

13 (2) shall ensure that the faculty administering
14 the CVE Lab, additional CVE Lab instructors and
15 advisors, and participating students represent an
16 interdisciplinary cross-section of the institution of
17 higher education, including disciplines not tradition-
18 ally associated with counterterrorism.

19 **SEC. 6. ASSESSMENT AND REPORT.**

20 (a) REPORT.—Not later than 1 year after the date
21 on which a CVE Lab is first established, the head of the
22 institution of higher education at which the CVE Lab is
23 established shall submit to the Secretary of Homeland Se-
24 curity and the appropriate congressional committees a re-
25 port regarding the impact of the CVE Lab.

1 (b) ASSESSMENT.—The Secretary of Homeland Secu-
2 rity, acting through the Under Secretary for Science and
3 Technology and in coordination with the office within the
4 Department of Homeland Security responsible for coordi-
5 nating the CVE efforts of the Department of Homeland
6 Security, shall—

7 (1) commission an independent third-party as-
8 sessment of the impact of each CVE Lab; and

9 (2) not later than 180 days after the date on
10 which the assessment required under paragraph (1)
11 is completed, provide the assessment to the appro-
12 priate Congressional committees.

13 **SEC. 7. FUNCTIONS OF CENTERS FOR HOMELAND SECU-**
14 **RITY.**

15 Section 308(b)(2)(B) of the Homeland Security Act
16 of 2002 (6 U.S.C. 188(b)(2)(B)) is amended in section
17 308(b)(2)(B), by adding at the end the following:

18 “(xv) Countering violent extremism.”.

19 **SEC. 8. SUNSET.**

20 Sections 1 through 6 shall expire on the date that
21 is 7 years after the date of enactment of this Act.

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