

118TH CONGRESS  
1ST SESSION

# S. 3124

To expand and improve the Legal Assistance for Victims Grant Program to ensure legal assistance is provided for survivors in proceedings related to domestic violence and sexual assault, and for other purposes.

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IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

OCTOBER 25, 2023

Mr. SULLIVAN (for himself and Mr. PADILLA) introduced the following bill;  
which was read twice and referred to the Committee on the Judiciary

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## A BILL

To expand and improve the Legal Assistance for Victims Grant Program to ensure legal assistance is provided for survivors in proceedings related to domestic violence and sexual assault, 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 “Ensuring Representa-  
5 tion for Survivors Act”.

1 **SEC. 2. ENSURING ACCESS TO LEGAL ASSISTANCE IN PRO-**  
2 **CEEDINGS RELATED TO DOMESTIC VIO-**  
3 **LENCE AND SEXUAL ASSAULT.**

4 Section 1201 of the Violence Against Women Act of  
5 2000 (34 U.S.C. 20121) is amended—

6 (1) by redesignating subsection (f) as sub-  
7 section (g);

8 (2) by inserting after subsection (e) the fol-  
9 lowing:

10 “(f) GRANTS TO STATES TO ENSURE ACCESS TO  
11 LEGAL ASSISTANCE.—

12 “(1) IN GENERAL.—

13 “(A) AMOUNT.—In each fiscal year, the  
14 Attorney General shall award to each State sub-  
15 mitting an application under paragraph (3) a  
16 grant in an amount equal to .5 percent of the  
17 total amount appropriated pursuant to sub-  
18 section (g) for the fiscal year.

19 “(B) USE.—A State that receives a grant  
20 under subparagraph (A) shall use amounts  
21 from the grant to provide legal assistance to  
22 survivors of domestic violence, dating violence,  
23 stalking, and sexual assault, with the goal of  
24 every survivor of domestic violence, dating vio-  
25 lence, stalking, and sexual assault receiving  
26 legal assistance.

1           “(2) USE OF FUNDS.—

2                   “(A) IN GENERAL.—Amounts received by  
3 a State under this subsection shall be distrib-  
4 uted by the State to public or private entities  
5 within the State to implement, expand, and es-  
6 tablish efforts and projects to provide legal as-  
7 sistance, including pro bono representation and  
8 legal advocacy, to help survivors of domestic vi-  
9 olence, dating violence, stalking, or sexual as-  
10 sult—

11                   “(i) initiate or respond to motions to  
12 vacate or expunge a conviction, or similar  
13 actions, if the jurisdiction permits such a  
14 legal action based on a person’s status as  
15 a crime victim; and

16                   “(ii) with other civil legal actions,  
17 other than tort actions, which are reason-  
18 ably necessary as a direct result of the vic-  
19 timization, such as—

20                   “(I) civil legal assistance with di-  
21 vorce, child custody, child welfare, and  
22 support proceedings with cor-  
23 responding enforcement;

24                   “(II) assistance with and rep-  
25 resentation at proceedings for protec-

1           tive orders, restraining orders, or  
2           other stay-away orders;

3                   “(III) assistance with contract,  
4           housing, employment, education,  
5           healthcare, benefits, and privacy mat-  
6           ters; and

7                   “(IV) intervention with creditors,  
8           law enforcement officers, and other  
9           entities on behalf of survivors of iden-  
10          tity theft and financial fraud.

11                   “(B) ELIGIBILITY.—A public or private  
12          entity seeking distribution of amounts from a  
13          grant received by a State under this subsection  
14          shall meet the eligibility requirements described  
15          in subsection (d).

16                   “(3) APPLICATION.—Each State seeking a  
17          grant under this subsection shall submit an applica-  
18          tion to the Attorney General at such time and in  
19          such manner as the Attorney General may reason-  
20          ably require.”; and

21                   (3) in subsection (g), as so redesignated, by  
22          striking “\$57,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2014  
23          through 2018” and inserting “\$80,000,000 for each  
24          of fiscal years 2024 through 2028”.

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