

115TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 4720

To authorize the Office on Violence Against Women to improve the handling of crimes of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking by incorporating a trauma-informed approach into the initial response to and investigation of such crimes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

DECEMBER 21, 2017

Mr. EMMER (for himself, Mrs. HANDEL, Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ, Ms. JAYAPAL, Ms. KUSTER of New Hampshire, and Mr. WALZ) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on the Judiciary

A BILL

To authorize the Office on Violence Against Women to improve the handling of crimes of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking by incorporating a trauma-informed approach into the initial response to and investigation of such crimes.

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 “Abby Honold Act”.

5 **SEC. 2. DEMONSTRATION PROGRAM ON TRAUMA-IN-**
6 **FORMED TRAINING FOR LAW ENFORCEMENT.**

7 (a) DEFINITIONS.—In this section—

1 (1) the term “Attorney General” means the At-
2 torney General, acting through the Director of the
3 Office on Violence Against Women;

4 (2) the term “covered individual” means an in-
5 dividual who interfaces with victims of domestic vio-
6 lence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking,
7 including—

8 (A) an individual working for or on behalf
9 of an eligible entity;

10 (B) a school or university administrator;
11 and

12 (C) an emergency services or medical em-
13 ployee;

14 (3) the term “demonstration site”, with respect
15 to an eligible entity that receives a grant under this
16 section, means—

17 (A) if the eligible entity is a law enforce-
18 ment agency described in paragraph (4)(A), the
19 area over which the eligible entity has jurisdic-
20 tion; and

21 (B) if the eligible entity is an organization
22 or agency described in paragraph (4)(B), the
23 area over which a law enforcement agency de-
24 scribed in paragraph (4)(A) that is working in

1 collaboration with the eligible entity has juris-
2 diction; and

3 (4) the term “eligible entity” means—

4 (A) a State, local, territorial, or tribal law
5 enforcement agency; or

6 (B) a national, regional, or local victim
7 services organization or agency working in col-
8 laboration with a law enforcement agency de-
9 scribed in subparagraph (A).

10 (b) GRANTS AUTHORIZED.—

11 (1) IN GENERAL.—The Attorney General shall
12 award grants on a competitive basis to eligible enti-
13 ties to carry out the demonstration program under
14 this section by implementing evidence-based or
15 promising policies and practices to incorporate trau-
16 ma-informed techniques designed to—

17 (A) prevent re-traumatization of the vic-
18 tim;

19 (B) ensure that covered individuals use evi-
20 dence-based practices to respond to and inves-
21 tigate cases of domestic violence, dating vio-
22 lence, sexual assault, and stalking;

23 (C) improve communication between vic-
24 tims and law enforcement officers in an effort
25 to increase the likelihood of the successful in-

1 vestigation and prosecution of the alleged crime
2 in a manner that protects the victim to the
3 greatest extent possible;

4 (D) increase collaboration among stake-
5 holders who are part of the coordinated commu-
6 nity response to domestic violence, dating vio-
7 lence, sexual assault, and stalking; and

8 (E) evaluate the effectiveness of the train-
9 ing process and content by measuring—

10 (i) investigative and prosecutorial
11 practices and outcomes; and

12 (ii) the well-being of victims and their
13 satisfaction with the criminal justice proc-
14 ess.

15 (2) TERM.—The Attorney General shall make
16 grants under this section for each of the first 2 fis-
17 cal years beginning after the date of enactment of
18 this Act.

19 (3) AWARD BASIS.—The Attorney General shall
20 award grants under this section to multiple eligible
21 entities for use in a variety of settings and commu-
22 nities, including—

23 (A) urban, suburban, tribal, remote, and
24 rural areas;

25 (B) college campuses; or

1 (C) traditionally underserved communities.

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

4 (1) train covered individuals within the dem-
5 onstration site of the eligible entity to use evidence-
6 based, trauma-informed techniques throughout an
7 investigation into domestic violence, dating violence,
8 sexual assault, or stalking, including by—

9 (A) conducting victim interviews in a man-
10 ner that—

11 (i) elicits valuable information about
12 the domestic violence, dating violence, sex-
13 ual assault, or stalking; and

14 (ii) avoids re-traumatization of the
15 victim;

16 (B) conducting field investigations that
17 mirror best and promising practices available at
18 the time of the investigation;

19 (C) customizing investigative approaches to
20 ensure a culturally and linguistically appro-
21 priate approach to the community being served;

22 (D) becoming proficient in understanding
23 and responding to complex cases, including
24 cases of domestic violence, dating violence, sex-
25 ual assault, or stalking—

- 1 (i) facilitated by alcohol or drugs;
- 2 (ii) involving strangulation;
- 3 (iii) committed by a non-stranger;
- 4 (iv) committed by an individual of the
- 5 same sex as the victim;
- 6 (v) involving a victim with a disability;
- 7 (vi) involving a male victim; or
- 8 (vii) involving a lesbian, gay, bisexual,
- 9 or transgender (commonly referred to as
- 10 “LGBT”) victim;
- 11 (E) developing collaborative relationships
- 12 between—
 - 13 (i) law enforcement officers and other
 - 14 members of the response team; and
 - 15 (ii) the community being served; and
- 16 (F) developing an understanding of how to
- 17 define, identify, and correctly classify a report
- 18 of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual as-
- 19 sault, or stalking; and
- 20 (2) promote the efforts of the eligible entity to
- 21 improve the response of covered individuals to do-
- 22 mestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and
- 23 stalking through various communication channels,
- 24 such as the website of the eligible entity, social
- 25 media, print materials, and community meetings, in

1 order to ensure that all covered individuals within
2 the demonstration site of the eligible entity are
3 aware of those efforts and included in trainings, to
4 the extent practicable.

5 (d) DEMONSTRATION PROGRAM TRAININGS ON
6 TRAUMA-INFORMED APPROACHES.—

7 (1) IDENTIFICATION OF EXISTING
8 TRAININGS.—

9 (A) IN GENERAL.—The Attorney General
10 shall identify trainings for law enforcement offi-
11 cers, in existence as of the date on which the
12 Attorney General begins to solicit applications
13 for grants under this section, that—

14 (i) employ a trauma-informed ap-
15 proach to domestic violence, dating vio-
16 lence, sexual assault, and stalking; and

17 (ii) focus on the fundamentals of
18 the—

19 (I) neurobiology of trauma; and

20 (II) impact of trauma on victims
21 of domestic violence, dating violence,
22 sexual assault, and stalking.

23 (B) SELECTION.—An eligible entity that
24 receives a grant under this section shall select
25 1 or more of the approaches employed by a

1 training identified under subparagraph (A) to
2 test within the demonstration site of the eligible
3 entity.

4 (2) CONSULTATION.—In carrying out para-
5 graph (1), the Attorney General shall consult with
6 the Director of the Office for Victims of Crime in
7 order to seek input from and cultivate consensus
8 among outside practitioners and other stakeholders
9 through facilitated discussions and focus groups on
10 best practices in the field of trauma-informed care
11 for victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sex-
12 ual assault, and stalking.

13 (e) EVALUATION.—The Attorney General, in con-
14 sultation with the Director of the National Institute of
15 Justice, shall require each eligible entity that receives a
16 grant under this section to identify a research partner,
17 preferably a local research partner to—

18 (1) design a system for generating and col-
19 lecting the appropriate data to facilitate an inde-
20 pendent process or impact evaluation of the use of
21 the grant funds;

22 (2) periodically conduct an evaluation described
23 in paragraph (1); and

24 (3) periodically make publicly available, during
25 the grant period—

1 (A) preliminary results of the evaluations
2 conducted under paragraph (2); and

3 (B) recommendations for improving the
4 use of the grant funds.

5 (f) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—The At-
6 torney General shall carry out this section using amounts
7 otherwise available to the Attorney General.

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