

116TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

H. R. 7944

To require the Secretary of Homeland Security to assess technology needs along the Southern border and develop a strategy for bridging such gaps.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

AUGUST 4, 2020

Ms. TORRES SMALL of New Mexico (for herself, Mr. McCAUL, Ms. SLOTKIN, and Mr. CLOUD) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Homeland Security

A BILL

To require the Secretary of Homeland Security to assess technology needs along the Southern border and develop a strategy for bridging such gaps.

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 “Southwest Border Se-
5 curity Technology Improvement Act of 2020”.

6 **SEC. 2. DEFINITIONS.**

7 In this Act:

1 (1) APPROPRIATE CONGRESSIONAL COMMIT-
2 TEES.—The term “appropriate congressional com-
3 mittees” means—

4 (A) the Committee on Homeland Security
5 and Governmental Affairs of the Senate; and

6 (B) the Committee on Homeland Security
7 of the House of Representatives.

8 (2) DEPARTMENT.—The term “Department”
9 means the Department of Homeland Security.

10 (3) SECRETARY.—The term “Secretary” means
11 the Secretary of Homeland Security.

12 (4) SOUTHWEST BORDER.—The term “South-
13 west border” means the international land border
14 between the United States and Mexico, including the
15 ports of entry along such border.

16 **SEC. 3. SOUTHERN BORDER TECHNOLOGY NEEDS ANAL-**
17 **YSIS AND UPDATES.**

18 (a) TECHNOLOGY NEEDS ANALYSIS.—Not later than
19 1 year after the date of the enactment of this Act, the
20 Secretary shall submit, to the appropriate congressional
21 committees, a technology needs analysis for border secu-
22 rity technology along the Southwest border.

23 (b) CONTENTS.—The analysis required under sub-
24 section (a) shall include an assessment of—

1 (1) the technology needs and gaps along the
2 Southwest border—

3 (A) to prevent terrorists and instruments
4 of terror from entering the United States;

5 (B) to combat and reduce cross-border
6 criminal activity, including, but not limited to—

7 (i) the transport of illegal goods, such
8 as illicit drugs; and

9 (ii) human smuggling and human
10 trafficking; and

11 (C) to facilitate the flow of legal trade
12 across the Southwest border;

13 (2) recent technological advancements in—

14 (A) manned aircraft sensor, communica-
15 tion, and common operating picture technology;

16 (B) unmanned aerial systems and related
17 technology, including counter-unmanned aerial
18 system technology;

19 (C) surveillance technology, including—

20 (i) mobile surveillance vehicles;

21 (ii) associated electronics, including
22 cameras, sensor technology, and radar;

23 (iii) tower-based surveillance tech-
24 nology;

1 (iv) advanced unattended surveillance
2 sensors; and

3 (v) deployable, lighter-than-air,
4 ground surveillance equipment;

5 (D) nonintrusive inspection technology, in-
6 cluding non-X-ray devices utilizing muon to-
7 mography and other advanced detection tech-
8 nology;

9 (E) tunnel detection technology; and

10 (F) communications equipment, includ-
11 ing—

12 (i) radios;

13 (ii) long-term evolution broadband;

14 and

15 (iii) miniature satellites;

16 (3) any other technological advancements that
17 the Secretary determines to be critical to the De-
18 partment's mission along the Southwest border;

19 (4) whether the use of the technological ad-
20 vances described in paragraphs (2) and (3) will—

21 (A) improve border security;

22 (B) improve the capability of the Depart-
23 ment to accomplish its mission along the South-
24 west border;

1 (C) reduce technology gaps along the
2 Southwest border; and

3 (D) enhance the safety of any officer or
4 agent of the Department or any other Federal
5 agency;

6 (5) the Department's ongoing border security
7 technology development efforts, including efforts
8 by—

9 (A) U.S. Customs and Border Protection;

10 (B) the Science and Technology Direc-
11 torate; and

12 (C) the technology assessment office of any
13 other operational component;

14 (6) the technology needs for improving border
15 security, such as—

16 (A) information technology or other com-
17 puter or computing systems data capture;

18 (B) biometrics;

19 (C) cloud storage; and

20 (D) intelligence data sharing capabilities
21 among agencies within the Department;

22 (7) any other technological needs or factors, in-
23 cluding border security infrastructure, such as phys-
24 ical barriers or dual-purpose infrastructure, that the
25 Secretary determines should be considered; and

1 (8) currently deployed technology or new tech-
2 nology that would improve the Department's abil-
3 ity—

4 (A) to reasonably achieve operational con-
5 trol and situational awareness along the South-
6 west border; and

7 (B) to collect metrics for securing the bor-
8 der at and between ports of entry, as required
9 under subsections (b) and (c) of section 1092 of
10 division A of the National Defense Authoriza-
11 tion Act for Fiscal Year 2017 (6 U.S.C. 223).

12 (c) UPDATES.—

13 (1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 2 years after
14 the submission of the analysis required under sub-
15 section (a), and biannually thereafter for the fol-
16 lowing 4 years, the Secretary shall submit an update
17 to such analysis to the appropriate congressional
18 committees.

19 (2) CONTENTS.—Each update required under
20 paragraph (1) shall include a plan for utilizing the
21 resources of the Department to meet the border se-
22 curity technology needs and gaps identified pursuant
23 to subsection (b), including developing or acquiring
24 technologies not currently in use by the Department

1 that would allow the Department to bridge existing
2 border technology gaps along the Southwest border.

3 (d) ITEMS TO BE CONSIDERED.—In compiling the
4 technology needs analysis and updates required under this
5 section, the Secretary shall consider and examine—

6 (1) technology that is deployed and is sufficient
7 for the Department’s use along the Southwest bor-
8 der;

9 (2) technology that is deployed, but is insuffi-
10 cient for the Department’s use along the Southwest
11 border;

12 (3) technology that is not deployed, but is nec-
13 essary for the Department’s use along the Southwest
14 border;

15 (4) current formal departmental requirements
16 documentation examining current border security
17 threats and challenges faced by any component of
18 the Department;

19 (5) trends and forecasts regarding migration
20 across the Southwest border;

21 (6) the impact on projected staffing and deploy-
22 ment needs for the Department, including staffing
23 needs that may be fulfilled through the use of tech-
24 nology;

1 (7) the needs and challenges faced by employees
2 of the Department who are deployed along the
3 Southwest border;

4 (8) the need to improve cooperation among
5 Federal, State, Tribal, local, and Mexican law en-
6 forcement entities to enhance security along the
7 Southwest border;

8 (9) the privacy implications of existing tech-
9 nology and the acquisition and deployment of new
10 technologies and supporting infrastructure, with an
11 emphasis on how privacy risks might be mitigated
12 through the use of technology, training, and policy;

13 (10) the impact of any ongoing public health
14 emergency that impacts Department operations
15 along the Southwest border; and

16 (11) the ability of, and the needs for, the De-
17 partment to assist with search and rescue efforts for
18 individuals or groups that may be in physical danger
19 or in need of medical assistance.

20 (e) CLASSIFIED FORM.—To the extent possible, the
21 Secretary shall submit the technology needs analysis and
22 updates required under this section in unclassified form,
23 but may submit such documents, or portions of such docu-

- 1 ments, in classified form if the Secretary determines that
- 2 such action is appropriate.

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