

118TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

S. 3586

To amend the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968 to establish a grant program to recruit, retain, certify, and train bilingual law enforcement officers, and for other purposes.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

JANUARY 11, 2024

Mr. OSSOFF introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on the Judiciary

A BILL

To amend the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968 to establish a grant program to recruit, retain, certify, and train bilingual law enforcement officers, 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 “Bilingual Public Safety
5 Act”.

1 **SEC. 2. BILINGUAL LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICER GRANTS.**

2 Section 1701 of title I of the Omnibus Crime Control
3 and Safe Streets Act of 1968 (34 U.S.C. 10381) is amend-
4 ed by adding at the end the following:

5 “(o) BILINGUAL LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICER
6 GRANTS.—

7 “(1) DEFINITIONS.—In this subsection:

8 “(A) COVERED TRAINING PROGRAM.—The
9 term ‘covered training program’ means—

10 “(i) training curricula for law enforce-
11 ment officers to enable effective commu-
12 nication with members of communities
13 with limited English proficiency; and

14 “(ii) an education program relating to
15 the matter described in clause (i), includ-
16 ing a partnership between a law enforce-
17 ment agency and a community college or
18 university under which law enforcement of-
19 ficers of the law enforcement agency take
20 language classes or participate in a series
21 of trainings conducted by the law enforce-
22 ment agency.

23 “(B) ELIGIBLE ENTITY.—The term ‘eligi-
24 ble entity’ means—

25 “(i) a State, Tribal, or local law en-
26 forcement agency; and

1 “(ii) a group of Tribal law enforce-
2 ment agencies.

3 “(C) GRANT RECIPIENT.—The term ‘grant
4 recipient’ means a recipient of a grant under
5 the Program.

6 “(D) LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCY.—The
7 term ‘law enforcement agency’ means a public
8 agency charged with policing functions, includ-
9 ing any component bureau of the agency (such
10 as a governmental victim services program or
11 village public safety officer program), including
12 an agency composed of officers or persons re-
13 ferred to in subparagraph (B) or (C) of section
14 2(10) of the Indian Law Enforcement Reform
15 Act (25 U.S.C. 2801(10)).

16 “(E) PROGRAM.—The term ‘Program’
17 means the grant program established under
18 subsection paragraph (2).

19 “(2) GRANT PROGRAM.—Not later than 180
20 days after the date of enactment of the Bilingual
21 Public Safety Act, the Attorney General shall estab-
22 lish a grant program within the Office of Commu-
23 nity Oriented Policing Services under which the At-
24 torney General awards grants to eligible entities to
25 aid in recruiting, retaining, or training law enforce-

1 ment officers for the purpose of serving communities
2 with limited English proficiency.

3 “(3) APPLICATIONS.—An eligible entity seeking
4 a grant under the Program shall submit to the At-
5 torney General an application at such time, in such
6 manner, and containing or accompanied by—

7 “(A) such information as the Attorney
8 General may reasonably require;

9 “(B) a description of each eligible project
10 under paragraph (5) that the grant will fund;
11 and

12 “(C) a plan for evaluating the effectiveness
13 of the eligible entity in implementing each
14 project described in subparagraph (B).

15 “(4) SELECTION OF GRANT RECIPIENTS.—In
16 selecting a recipient of a grant under the Program,
17 the Attorney General shall consider—

18 “(A) the specific plan and activities pro-
19 posed by the applicant to improve the ability of
20 the applicant to serve communities with limited
21 English proficiency;

22 “(B) the size of each community with lim-
23 ited English proficiency that will be directly
24 served by recipient;

1 “(C) the number of law enforcement offi-
2 cers the grant would support;

3 “(D) the plan of the recipient described in
4 paragraph (3)(C); and

5 “(E) the amount of funding from the
6 grant the recipient will dedicate to direct pro-
7 gram activities, as opposed to program adminis-
8 tration.

9 “(5) ELIGIBLE PROJECTS.—

10 “(A) IN GENERAL.—A grant recipient shall
11 use the grant for activities with the specific ob-
12 jective of improving the ability of the grant re-
13 cipient to serve communities with limited
14 English proficiency, including by—

15 “(i) hiring or retaining bilingual or
16 multilingual officers who, in the course of
17 their official duties, use their foreign lan-
18 guage skills to communicate with members
19 of those communities; and

20 “(ii) providing language education or
21 training developed, identified, or approved
22 by the Attorney General under paragraph
23 (6) to monolingual, bilingual, or multi-
24 lingual law enforcement officers to enable
25 those law enforcement officers to commu-

1 nicate with members of those communities
2 and in the course of their official duties.

3 “(B) LIMITATIONS.—

4 “(i) COMPENSATION AND BONUSES.—

5 “(I) IN GENERAL.—With respect
6 to a grant recipient that uses amounts
7 from a grant under this subsection to
8 provide compensation or recruitment
9 or retention bonuses to law enforce-
10 ment officers, the grant recipient shall
11 require the law enforcement officer to
12 commit to employment by the grant
13 recipient during the 3-year period be-
14 ginning on the date of the provision of
15 the compensation or recruitment or
16 retention bonus.

17 “(II) RETURN OF FUNDS.—A

18 law enforcement officer who does not
19 remain employed by a grant recipient
20 during the 3-year period described in
21 subclause (I) after receiving com-
22 pensation or a recruitment or reten-
23 tion bonus pursuant to subclause (I)
24 shall return a prorated amount of the
25 compensation or recruitment or reten-

1 tion bonus based on the period during
 2 which the law enforcement officer
 3 does not remain employed.

4 “(ii) PROHIBITION ON REMOTE SERV-
 5 ICES.—A grant recipient may not use
 6 funds from the grant for remote, on-de-
 7 mand translation services, such as entering
 8 into a contract with a translation service
 9 that English-speaking law enforcement of-
 10 ficers call during the course of an encoun-
 11 ter to provide translation by phone.

12 “(6) LANGUAGE EDUCATION OR TRAINING.—

13 “(A) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 180
 14 days after the date of enactment of the Bilin-
 15 gual Public Safety Act, the Attorney General
 16 shall develop or identify effective covered train-
 17 ing programs for law enforcement officers.

18 “(B) APPROVAL OF PROPOSED PRO-
 19 GRAMS.—The Attorney General may approve a
 20 covered training program identified by an eligi-
 21 ble entity in an application submitted under
 22 paragraph (3).

23 “(C) REQUIREMENTS.—The covered train-
 24 ing programs developed, identified, or approved
 25 under this paragraph shall include—

1 “(i) pre-training and post-training
2 tests to assess relevant knowledge and
3 skills covered in the covered training pro-
4 gram; and

5 “(ii) follow-up evaluative assessments
6 to determine the degree to which partici-
7 pants in the covered training program
8 apply the knowledge and skills gained in
9 the covered training program in their jobs.

10 “(D) CONSULTATION.—The Attorney Gen-
11 eral shall develop, identify, and approve train-
12 ing curricula under this paragraph in consulta-
13 tion with—

14 “(i) relevant law enforcement agencies
15 of States and units of local government;

16 “(ii) professional law enforcement
17 agencies;

18 “(iii) law enforcement labor or rep-
19 resentative associations;

20 “(iv) racial, ethnic, or cultural affinity
21 groups;

22 “(v) associations made up of or that
23 represent individuals with limited English
24 proficiency; and

1 “(vi) civil rights and civil liberties
2 groups.

3 “(E) TIMING OF GRANT.—Before the date
4 on which the Attorney General awards a grant
5 to a grant recipient under this subsection, the
6 Attorney General shall confirm that the cur-
7 ricula the grant recipient plans to use for lan-
8 guage education or training is developed, identi-
9 fied, or approved under this paragraph.

10 “(F) LIST.—The Attorney General shall
11 include as a part of grant application materials
12 for the Program on the website of the Depart-
13 ment of Justice a list of the covered training
14 programs developed, identified, or approved
15 under this paragraph.

16 “(7) BACKGROUND CHECK REQUIREMENT.—An
17 eligible entity that uses amounts from a grant under
18 this subsection to hire a new law enforcement officer
19 shall, before hiring the law enforcement officer, per-
20 form a background check on the law enforcement of-
21 ficer that includes—

22 “(A) if permitted, a psychological evalua-
23 tion; and

24 “(B) a search against, if reasonably avail-
25 able—

1 “(i) the National Decertification
2 Index established by the International As-
3 sociation of Directors of Law Enforcement
4 Standards and Training;

5 “(ii) the National Law Enforcement
6 Accountability Database established under
7 Executive Order 14074 (87 Fed. Reg.
8 32945; relating to effective, accountable
9 policing and criminal justice practices);

10 “(iii) any system established by the
11 State of the eligible entity to track the
12 misconduct, disciplinary history, or decerti-
13 fication of law enforcement officers; and

14 “(iv) any system established by the lo-
15 cality of the eligible entity to track the
16 items described in clause (iii).

17 “(8) REPORT.—

18 “(A) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 1 year
19 after the date on which a grant recipient re-
20 ceives a grant under the Program, and annually
21 thereafter until the date described in subpara-
22 graph (B), the grant recipient shall submit to
23 the Attorney General a report on the activities
24 carried out using the grant, including, if appli-
25 cable—

1 “(i) the number of bilingual or multi-
2 lingual law enforcement officers who re-
3 ceived compensation or recruitment or re-
4 tention bonuses awarded with amounts
5 from a grant under this subsection and the
6 amount of grant funds expended for such
7 compensation or bonuses of law enforce-
8 ment officers;

9 “(ii) with respect to language edu-
10 cation or training provided with a grant
11 under the Program—

12 “(I) the number of law enforce-
13 ment officers who received the edu-
14 cation or training;

15 “(II) a description of the edu-
16 cation or training; and

17 “(III) data on the effectiveness of
18 the education or training;

19 “(iii) with respect to encounters of
20 law enforcement officers with members of
21 communities with limited English pro-
22 ficiency during the preceding year, data
23 on—

24 “(I) the number of those encoun-
25 ters; and

1 “(II) the portion of those encoun-
 2 ters that involved personnel who re-
 3 ceived, using funds from a grant—

4 “(aa) compensation or re-
 5 cruitment or retention bonuses;
 6 or

7 “(bb) language education or
 8 training; and

9 “(iv) any other data the Attorney
 10 General determines appropriate.

11 “(B) DATE DESCRIBED.—The date de-
 12 scribed in this subparagraph, with respect to a
 13 grant recipient, is—

14 “(i) the date on which the grant re-
 15 cipient expends all amounts from the grant
 16 and completes each activity conducted with
 17 those amounts; or

18 “(ii) an appropriate date determined
 19 by the Attorney General that is not later
 20 than the third September 30 occurring
 21 after the date described in clause (i).

22 “(9) EVALUATION AND REPORT.—

23 “(A) EVALUATION.—Not later than 2
 24 years after the date of enactment of the Bilin-
 25 gual Public Safety Act, and every 2 years there-

1 after, the Director of the National Institute of
2 Justice shall conduct an evaluation of—

3 “(i) the practices deployed by grant
4 recipients to serve communities with lim-
5 ited English proficiency; and

6 “(ii) the efficacy of the Program in
7 improving law enforcement communication
8 with communities with limited English pro-
9 ficiency.

10 “(B) PUBLICATION.—Not later than 2
11 years after the date of enactment of this Act,
12 the Director of the National Institute of Justice
13 shall submit to Congress and make publicly
14 available a report summarizing the evaluation
15 conducted under subparagraph (A).

16 “(10) APPROPRIATIONS.—There are authorized
17 to be appropriated to the Attorney General
18 \$50,000,000 to carry out this subsection for each of
19 fiscal years 2024 through 2033.”.

○