

117TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 5785

To require the Secretary of Housing and Urban Development to improve services for survivors of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking and their families.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

OCTOBER 28, 2021

Mr. O'HALLERAN (for himself and Mrs. WAGNER) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Financial Services

A BILL

To require the Secretary of Housing and Urban Development to improve services for survivors of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking and their families.

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 “Help End Abusive Liv-
5 ing Situations Act” or the “HEALS Act”.

6 **SEC. 2. DEFINITIONS.**

7 In this Act—

1 (1) the terms “dating violence”, “domestic vio-
 2 lence”, “sexual assault”, and “stalking” have the
 3 meanings given those terms in section 40002(a) of
 4 the Violence Against Women Act of 1994 (34 U.S.C.
 5 12291(a));

6 (2) the term “Secretary” means the Secretary
 7 of Housing and Urban Development;

8 (3) the term “victim service provider” has the
 9 meaning given the term in section 401 of the
 10 McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act (42
 11 U.S.C. 11360); and

12 (4) the term “victim service provider project”
 13 means a project administered by a victim service
 14 provider designed to meet the needs of survivors of
 15 domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or
 16 stalking and their families.

17 **SEC. 3. STRENGTHENING HOUSING RESOURCES PROTEC-**
 18 **TIONS FOR SURVIVORS OF DOMESTIC VIO-**
 19 **LENCE, DATING VIOLENCE, SEXUAL ASSAULT,**
 20 **OR STALKING.**

21 (a) NOTICE OF FUNDING AVAILABILITY.—Subtitle C
 22 of title IV of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance
 23 Act (42 U.S.C. 11360 et seq.) is amended—

24 (1) in section 422 (42 U.S.C. 11382)—

25 (A) in subsection (a)—

1 (i) by striking “The Secretary” and
2 inserting the following:

3 “(1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary”; and

4 (ii) by adding at the end the fol-
5 lowing:

6 “(2) SCORING.—For purposes of scoring appli-
7 cants in the notice of funding availability, the Sec-
8 retary shall neither prioritize nor deprioritize the fol-
9 lowing categories of projects solely on the basis of
10 the category:

11 “(A) Rapid re-housing.

12 “(B) Permanent supportive housing.

13 “(C) Transitional housing.

14 “(D) Short-term emergency shelter.”; and

15 (2) in section 428(d)(2) (42 U.S.C.
16 11386b(d)(2))—

17 (A) in subparagraph (B), by striking
18 “and” at the end;

19 (B) by redesignating subparagraph (C) as
20 subparagraph (D); and

21 (C) by inserting after subparagraph (B)
22 the following:

23 “(C) transitional housing for various popu-
24 lations, including, for survivors of domestic vio-
25 lence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalk-

1 ing and their families, projects providing transi-
2 tional or permanent housing that provide trau-
3 ma-informed services, maximize client choice,
4 and address the special needs of those sur-
5 vivors; and”.

6 (b) STRATEGIC PLAN.—In the next strategic plan re-
7 quired after the date of enactment of this Act under sec-
8 tion 306 of title 5, United States Code, the Secretary shall
9 include as a goal or objective—

10 (1) responding, including allocating appropriate
11 resources, to the housing needs of survivors of do-
12 mestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or
13 stalking and their families; and

14 (2) collaborating with the Office of Violence
15 Against Women of the Department of Justice to en-
16 sure that there is no conflict between the rapid re-
17 housing requirements of that Office and of the De-
18 partment of Housing and Urban Development.

19 (c) EVALUATION.—Not later than 180 days after the
20 date of enactment of this Act, the Secretary shall de-
21 velop—

22 (1) in accordance with the selection criteria
23 under section 427(b)(1) of the McKinney-Vento
24 Homeless Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 11386a(b)(1)),
25 as amended by section 4, measurable criteria upon

1 which applicants for a grant under section subtitle
2 C of title IV of that Act (42 U.S.C. 11381 et seq.)
3 are evaluated to demonstrate their local policy prior-
4 ities focused on survivors of domestic violence, dat-
5 ing violence, sexual assault, or stalking and their
6 families, including survivor-centered coordinated
7 entry processes that appropriately assess and
8 prioritize those survivors and take into account the
9 safety and confidentiality needs of those survivors
10 and their families; and

11 (2) mechanisms that promote the provision of
12 technical assistance and support for programs to im-
13 prove outcomes and maintain grant funding.

14 (d) RESEARCH AGENDA.—Not later than 180 days
15 after the date of enactment of this Act, the Secretary shall
16 develop a research agenda that—

17 (1) works and collaborates with the Family Vio-
18 lence Prevention and Services Program of the De-
19 partment of Health and Human Services and the
20 Office of Violence Against Women of the Depart-
21 ment of Justice; and

22 (2) focuses on survivors of domestic violence,
23 dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking and their
24 families, concentrating on the housing modalities
25 that best support them and the mechanisms that

1 best facilitate their efforts to secure housing, while
 2 also paying attention to the critical safety concerns
 3 and the link between trauma and residential sta-
 4 bility.

5 **SEC. 4. INCREASING ACCESS TO SAFE SHELTER FOR SUR-**
 6 **VIVORS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE, DATING VI-**
 7 **OLENCE, SEXUAL ASSAULT, OR STALKING.**

8 Section 427 of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assist-
 9 ance Act (42 U.S.C. 11386a) is amended—

10 (1) in subsection (b)(1)—

11 (A) in subparagraph (B)(iv)(I), by insert-
 12 ing “, including survivors of domestic violence,
 13 dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking and
 14 their families” after “subpopulations”;

15 (B) in subparagraph (C)—

16 (i) in clause (iii), by striking “and” at
 17 the end;

18 (ii) in clause (iv), by adding “and” at
 19 the end; and

20 (iii) by adding at the end the fol-
 21 lowing:

22 “(v) meets the safety and trauma
 23 needs of survivors of domestic violence,
 24 dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking

1 and their families, including access to safe
2 shelter;”;

3 (C) in subparagraph (F)(ii), by striking
4 “and” at the end;

5 (D) by redesignating subparagraph (G) as
6 subparagraph (H); and

7 (E) by inserting after subparagraph (F)
8 the following:

9 “(G) the extent to which the assistance to
10 be provided within the geographic area will
11 meet the safety and trauma needs of survivors
12 of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual as-
13 sault, or stalking and their families, including
14 access to safe shelter; and”; and

15 (2) by adding at the end the following:

16 “(d) EQUAL CONSIDERATION OF TRANSITIONAL
17 HOUSING PROJECTS.—In awarding funds to recipients
18 under this subtitle, the Secretary shall consider transi-
19 tional housing projects on an even basis with any other
20 project of a qualified applicant.”.

21 **SEC. 5. REPORT TO CONGRESS.**

22 Not later than 1 year after the date of enactment
23 of this Act, the Secretary shall submit to Congress a re-
24 port on—

1 (1) the trends in allocating resources beginning
2 after the date of enactment of the Homeless Emer-
3 gency Assistance and Rapid Transition to Housing
4 Act of 2009 (Public Law 111–22; 123 Stat. 1663)
5 to address the housing needs of survivors of domes-
6 tic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalk-
7 ing and their families; and

8 (2) the increase in the effectiveness of those re-
9 sources for promoting self-sufficiency and assisting
10 survivors in finding employment beginning after the
11 date of enactment of this Act.

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