



IN THE CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES

SEPTEMBER 13th, 2020

Mr. ROMERIO (for himself, Mr. Walker) introduced the following
bill;

To create a Federal Grant Program devoted to increasing pay for State Jurors, to protect
the fairness, accuracy, and solemnity of the Trial Court.

Be it enacted by the United States Senate in Congress Assembled,

Sec. 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the “Jury Restoration Act of 2020”

Sec. 2. FINDINGS.

Congress finds that—

- (a) Jurors in the United States are often paid four times less than the Federal Minimum Wage.
- (b) Jurors in the United States are paid so low that it can be one of the reasons people choose not to participate in juries, which leads to less diversity. The low pay is one of the reasons that America’s poor and underprivileged minorities choose not to participate in jury duty, leading to lower levels of representation.
- (c) Increasing pay for jurors through a Federal Grant Program will allow Trials to have juries that are serious about their work, and the Trial itself. This will lead to better accuracy, representation, and respect for the Trial at hand.
- (d) Ensuring that Jurors are paid a \$15/hour wage will make jury duty a more appealing and universal task for the citizens. Studies have repeatedly shown that the more people are

represented and participate in juries, the more they succeed. There are many reforms necessary to improve America's jury system, and this is the first step.

Sec. 3. DEFINITIONS.

In this act—

- (a) “The Secretary” shall be defined as the Attorney General of the United States.
- (b) “Jury (Jurors)” shall be defined as the body of individuals (or the individuals) that participate in delivering a verdict in a State Trial Court.

Sec. 4. ESTABLISHING A FEDERAL GRANT PROGRAM

IN GENERAL.— The Secretary shall establish an agency to provide applications for Federal Grants to individual States.

- (1) “The Agency to Establish Federal Jury Funding” (referred to henceforth as, “The Agency”) shall be composed of ten people, appointed by the Secretary. In general, they shall have experience in economics, wages, and other relevant skills necessary to perform the task described by this Section. The Secretary shall have the power to replace these individuals as they see fit.
- (2) The Agency shall have three primary goals—
 - (a) Establishing a Federal Grant Application to be completed by individual States to receive Federal Funding, as described in Paragraph (3).
 - (b) Determining whether or not to approve Applications based on the merit of the Application, the size and function of the State's Justice System, and other relevant factors, as described in Paragraph (4).
 - (c) Determining the cost of approved Applications, and drafting reports to Congress detailing the cost, and other relevant information, as described in Paragraph (5).
 - (d) The Agency shall not have the Power to grant Federal Funding, as described in Paragraph (6).
- (3) Establishing a Federal Grant Application—
 - (a) The Agency shall create a Federal Grant Application. States interested in participating in the Program shall complete the Application to apply for Federal Funding.
 - (b) The Application may include any relevant information the Agency sees as necessary, as well as any information required to assess the competence of the

request, as well as any information required to determine the cost of the Application.

(4) Approval of Applications—

- (a) The Agency shall approve or deny applications based on the Application, and any other relevant information that may determine their decision. However, in general, States with the following should have their Applications denied—
 - (i) Jury selection systems that disenfranchise minorities and the poor.
 - (ii) Justice systems too large to complete the Program.
 - (iii) Applications deemed to be too expensive by the Agency.
- (b) The Agency shall factor in the following when determining whether or not to approve an Application—
 - (i) The condition of the State's Justice System (Jury Selection System, Prison System, Bail System, Mandatory Minimum Laws, etc.)
 - (ii) The size, scope, and cost of the Application. If a State's Justice System is too large to fully fund, the Application should be denied.
 - (iii) The ability of the State to match funds, as described in (_____).
 - (iv) In general, the State should assure that it is prepared to increase pay to fifteen Dollars per hour for every person in the State.

(5) Determining the Cost of Applications—

- (a) The Agency shall also be responsible for determining the cost of any approved Applications. The Agency shall use any factors it sees as relevant to determine the yearly cost of a Federal Grant Application. In general, the following factors should be considered—
 - (i) The number of Jurors participating in jury duty on a yearly basis.
 - (ii) The average amount of time Jurors server on any given Jury.
 - (iii) The current pay (or average pay) for Jurors in the State.

(6) Drafting a Report to Congress—

- (a) Once the Application has been approved, and the cost determined, the Agency shall be responsible for drafting a Report to Congress that must contain the following information—
 - (i) The cost of the Application for one year.
 - (ii) The reasoning behind the approval of the Application.
 - (iii) Projections on how much the Application will cost in future years.

(b) Once the Report is written, and signed by the Secretary, it will be submitted to Congress, that may approve funding through standard majorities in both Houses of Congress. The funding shall go into effect upon the President affixing their signature.

(c) Congress shall have to renew funding one year later, and all years henceforth.

(7) Federal Funding Guidelines

(a) In general—

- (i) Funding shall be enough to pay every Juror in the State, for every Trial of the Fiscal Year, fifteen Dollars per hour of performing Jury Duty.
- (ii) Funding shall only apply for one year, and will have to be renewed, in accordance with Paragraph (6)(c).

Sec. 5. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS

There is authorized to be Appropriated—

- (a) \$2,000,000 in the Fiscal Year 2021, to establish the Agency.
- (b) \$1,000,000 in all years henceforth, to maintain the Agency.

Sec. 6. ENACTMENT

The provisions of this Statute shall go into effect starting the First of January, 2021.