

Union Calendar No. 8

116TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 1598

[Report No. 116–22]

To require the Secretary of Homeland Security to issue a strategy to improve hiring and retention of U.S. Customs and Border Protection personnel in rural or remote areas, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

MARCH 7, 2019

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

MARCH 28, 2019

Additional sponsor: Mr. CRENSHAW

MARCH 28, 2019

Reported with an amendment, committed to the Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union, and ordered to be printed

[Strike out all after the enacting clause and insert the part printed in italic]

[For text of introduced bill, see copy of bill as introduced on March 7, 2019]

A BILL

To require the Secretary of Homeland Security to issue a strategy to improve hiring and retention of U.S. Customs and Border Protection personnel in rural or remote areas, 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 “U.S. Customs and Bor-*
5 *der Protection Rural and Remote Hiring and Retention*
6 *Strategy Act of 2019”.*

7 **SEC. 2. STRATEGY.**

8 *(a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than one year after the*
9 *date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Homeland*
10 *Security, acting through the Chief Human Capital Officer*
11 *of the Department of Homeland Security and the Commis-*
12 *sioner of U.S. Customs and Border Protection, shall issue*
13 *a strategy and implementation plan, including bench-*
14 *marks, to improve the hiring and retention of individuals*
15 *by the Commissioner in rural or remote areas relating to*
16 *employment in such areas.*

17 *(b) CONSIDERATIONS.—The strategy required under*
18 *subsection (a) shall take into consideration the following:*

19 *(1) Feedback from individuals who are U.S. Cus-*
20 *toms and Border Protection candidates or new hires*
21 *at locations in rural or remote areas, including feed-*
22 *back on the quality of life in such areas for new hires*
23 *and their families.*

24 *(2) Feedback from U.S. Customs and Border*
25 *Protection personnel, other than new hires, who are*

1 *stationed at locations in rural or remote areas, in-*
2 *cluding feedback on the quality of life in such areas*
3 *for such personnel and their families.*

4 (3) *Feedback from U.S. Customs and Border*
5 *Protection personnel who have decided to separate*
6 *from the agency.*

7 (4) *An assessment of existing Federal programs,*
8 *including financial incentives and other compensa-*
9 *tion-based flexibilities, regarding how to most effec-*
10 *tively aid spouses and families of individuals who are*
11 *candidates or new hires in a rural or remote area.*

12 (5) *An assessment of Department of Homeland*
13 *Security internship programs and the usefulness of*
14 *such programs in improving hiring by the Secretary*
15 *of Homeland Security in rural or remote areas.*

16 (c) *PLAN.—The implementation plan required under*
17 *subsection (a) shall—*

18 (1) *include a pilot or other program, as appro-*
19 *priate, to address hiring and retention challenges*
20 *faced by U.S. Customs and Border Protection in*
21 *rural or remote areas; and*

22 (2) *enhance strategic recruiting efforts of U.S.*
23 *Customs and Border Protection through relationships*
24 *with institutions of higher education (as such term is*
25 *defined in section 102 of the Higher Education Act*

1 of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1002)), veterans transition and
2 employment centers, and job placement programs in
3 regions that could assist in filling positions in rural
4 or remote areas.

5 (d) *REPORT TO CONGRESS AND GAO.*—Beginning on
6 the date that is one year after the date of issuance of the
7 strategy and implementation plan required under sub-
8 section (a) and for four years thereafter, the Secretary of
9 Homeland Security shall report to the Committee on Home-
10 land Security of the House of Representatives, the Com-
11 mittee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs of
12 the Senate, and the Comptroller General of the United
13 States on the extent to which such strategy and implementa-
14 tion plan has improved the hiring and retention by U.S.
15 Customs and Border Protection of employees in rural or
16 remote areas.

17 (e) *GAO ASSESSMENT.*—Not later than 120 days after
18 receiving each report required under subsection (d), the
19 Comptroller General of the United States shall submit to
20 the committees referred to in such subsection an assessment
21 of the effectiveness of U.S. Customs and Border Protection
22 actions described in each such report, including rec-
23 ommendations for improvements as the Comptroller Gen-
24 eral determines appropriate.

1 (f) *RURAL OR REMOTE AREAS DEFINED.*—For pur-
2 poses of this section, the term “rural or remote areas”
3 means areas within the United States that are not within
4 an area defined and designated as urbanized areas by the
5 Bureau of the Census in the most recently completed decen-
6 nial census and include areas along the northern and south-
7 ern borders.

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