

117TH CONGRESS  
1ST SESSION

# S. 2123

To establish the Federal Clearinghouse on Safety and Security Best Practices for Faith-Based Organizations and Houses of Worship, and for other purposes.

---

## IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

JUNE 17, 2021

Mr. PORTMAN (for himself and Ms. HASSAN) introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs

---

## A BILL

To establish the Federal Clearinghouse on Safety and Security Best Practices for Faith-Based Organizations and Houses of Worship, 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 “Pray Safe Act”.

5 **SEC. 2. DEFINITIONS.**

6 In this Act—

7 (1) the term “Clearinghouse” means the Fed-  
8 eral Clearinghouse on Safety Best Practices for  
9 Faith-Based Organizations and Houses of Worship

1 established under section 2220A of the Homeland  
 2 Security Act of 2002, as added by section 3 of this  
 3 Act;

4 (2) the term “Department” means the Depart-  
 5 ment of Homeland Security; and

6 (3) the term “Secretary” means the Secretary  
 7 of Homeland Security.

8 **SEC. 3. FEDERAL CLEARINGHOUSE ON SAFETY AND SECU-**  
 9 **RITY BEST PRACTICES FOR FAITH-BASED OR-**  
 10 **GANIZATIONS AND HOUSES OF WORSHIP.**

11 (a) IN GENERAL.—Subtitle A of title XXII of the  
 12 Homeland Security Act of 2002 (6 U.S.C. 651 et seq.),  
 13 as amended by section 9, is amended by adding at the  
 14 end:

15 **“SEC. 2220A. FEDERAL CLEARINGHOUSE ON SAFETY AND**  
 16 **SECURITY BEST PRACTICES FOR FAITH-**  
 17 **BASED ORGANIZATIONS AND HOUSES OF**  
 18 **WORSHIP.**

19 “(a) DEFINITIONS.—In this section—

20 “(1) the term ‘Clearinghouse’ means the Clear-  
 21 inghouse established under subsection (b);

22 “(2) the term ‘faith-based organization’ means  
 23 a group, center, or nongovernmental organization at  
 24 risk because of religious, ideological, or spiritual be-  
 25 liefs; and

1           “(3) the term ‘house of worship’ means a place  
2 or building, including synagogues, mosques, temples,  
3 and churches, in which congregants practice their re-  
4 ligious or spiritual beliefs.

5           “(b) ESTABLISHMENT.—

6           “(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 270 days  
7 after the date of enactment of the Pray Safe Act,  
8 the Secretary, in consultation with the Attorney  
9 General, the Executive Director of the White House  
10 Office of Faith-Based and Neighborhood Partner-  
11 ships, and the head of any other agency that the  
12 Secretary determines appropriate, shall establish a  
13 Federal Clearinghouse on Safety and Security Best  
14 Practices for Faith-Based Organizations and Houses  
15 of Worship within the Department.

16           “(2) PURPOSE.—The Clearinghouse shall be  
17 the primary resource of the Federal Government—

18           “(A) to educate and publish online best  
19 practices and recommendations for safety and  
20 security for faith-based organizations and  
21 houses of worship; and

22           “(B) to provide information relating to  
23 Federal grant programs available to faith-based  
24 organizations and houses of worship.

25           “(3) PERSONNEL.—

1           “(A) ASSIGNMENTS.—The Clearinghouse  
2 shall be assigned such personnel and resources  
3 as the Secretary considers appropriate to carry  
4 out this section.

5           “(B) DETAILEES.—The Secretary may co-  
6 ordinate detailees as required for the Clearing-  
7 house.

8           “(C) DESIGNATED POINT OF CONTACT.—  
9 There shall be not less than 1 employee as-  
10 signed or detailed to the Clearinghouse who  
11 shall be the designated point of contact to pro-  
12 vide information and assistance to faith-based  
13 organizations and houses of worship, including  
14 assistance relating to the grant program estab-  
15 lished under section 5 of the Pray Safe Act.  
16 The contact information of the designated point  
17 of contact shall be made available on the  
18 website of the Clearinghouse.

19           “(D) QUALIFICATION.—To the maximum  
20 extent possible, any personnel assigned or de-  
21 tailed to the Clearinghouse under this para-  
22 graph should be familiar with faith-based orga-  
23 nizations and houses of worship and with phys-  
24 ical and online security measures to identify  
25 and prevent safety and security risks.

1 “(c) CLEARINGHOUSE CONTENTS.—

2 “(1) EVIDENCE-BASED TIERS.—

3 “(A) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary, in con-  
4 sultation with the Attorney General, the Execu-  
5 tive Director of the White House Office of  
6 Faith-Based and Neighborhood Partnerships,  
7 and the head of any other agency that the Sec-  
8 retary determines appropriate, shall develop  
9 tiers for determining evidence-based practices  
10 that demonstrate a significant effect on improv-  
11 ing safety or security, or both, for faith-based  
12 organizations and houses of worship.

13 “(B) REQUIREMENTS.—The tiers required  
14 to be developed under subparagraph (A) shall—

15 “(i) prioritize—

16 “(I) strong evidence from not  
17 less than 1 well-designed and well-im-  
18 plemented experimental study; and

19 “(II) moderate evidence from not  
20 less than 1 well-designed and well-im-  
21 plemented quasi-experimental study;  
22 and

23 “(ii) consider promising evidence that  
24 demonstrates a rationale based on high-  
25 quality research findings or positive eval-

1           uations that such activity, strategy, or  
2           intervention is likely to improve security  
3           and promote safety for faith-based organi-  
4           zations and houses of worship.

5           “(2) CRITERIA FOR BEST PRACTICES AND REC-  
6           COMMENDATIONS.—The best practices and rec-  
7           ommendations of the Clearinghouse shall, at a min-  
8           imum—

9           “(A) identify areas of concern for faith-  
10          based organizations and houses of worship, in-  
11          cluding event planning recommendations, check-  
12          lists, facility hardening, tabletop exercise re-  
13          sources, and other resilience measures;

14          “(B) involve comprehensive safety meas-  
15          ures, including threat prevention, preparedness,  
16          protection, mitigation, incident response, and  
17          recovery to improve the safety posture of faith-  
18          based organizations and houses of worship upon  
19          implementation;

20          “(C) involve comprehensive safety meas-  
21          ures, including preparedness, protection, mitiga-  
22          tion, incident response, and recovery to improve  
23          the resiliency of faith-based organizations and  
24          houses of worship from manmade and natural  
25          disasters;

1           “(D) include any evidence or research ra-  
2           tionale supporting the determination of the  
3           Clearinghouse that the best practice or recom-  
4           mendation under subparagraph (B) has been  
5           shown to have a significant effect on improving  
6           the safety and security of individuals in faith-  
7           based organizations and houses of worship, in-  
8           cluding—

9                   “(i) findings and data from previous  
10                  Federal, State, local, Tribal, territorial,  
11                  private sector, and nongovernmental orga-  
12                  nization research centers relating to safety,  
13                  security, and targeted violence at faith-  
14                  based organizations and houses of worship;  
15                  and

16                   “(ii) other supportive evidence or find-  
17                  ings relied upon by the Clearinghouse in  
18                  determining best practices and recommen-  
19                  dations to improve the safety and security  
20                  posture of a faith-based organization or  
21                  house of worship upon implementation;  
22                  and

23           “(E) an overview of the available resources  
24           the Clearinghouse can provide for faith-based  
25           organizations and houses of worship.

1           “(3) ADDITIONAL INFORMATION.—The Clear-  
2           inghouse shall maintain and make available a com-  
3           prehensive index of all Federal grant programs for  
4           which faith-based organizations and houses of wor-  
5           ship are eligible, which shall include the performance  
6           metrics for each grant management that the recipi-  
7           ent will be required to provide.

8           “(4) PAST RECOMMENDATIONS.—To the great-  
9           est extent practicable, the Clearinghouse shall iden-  
10          tify and present, as appropriate, best practices and  
11          recommendations issued by Federal, State, local,  
12          Tribal, territorial, private sector, and nongovern-  
13          mental organizations relevant to the safety and secu-  
14          rity of faith-based organizations and houses of wor-  
15          ship.

16          “(d) ASSISTANCE AND TRAINING.—The Secretary  
17          may produce and publish materials on the Clearinghouse  
18          to assist and train faith-based organizations, houses of  
19          worship, and law enforcement agencies on the implementa-  
20          tion of the best practices and recommendations.

21          “(e) CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT.—

22                  “(1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall—

23                          “(A) collect for the purpose of continuous  
24                          improvement of the Clearinghouse—

25                                  “(i) Clearinghouse data analytics;

1           “(ii) user feedback on the implemen-  
2           tation of resources, best practices, and rec-  
3           ommendations identified by the Clearing-  
4           house; and

5           “(iii) any evaluations conducted on  
6           implementation of the best practices and  
7           recommendations of the Clearinghouse;  
8           and

9           “(B) in coordination with the Faith-Based  
10          Security Advisory Council of the Department,  
11          the Department of Justice, the Executive Direc-  
12          tor of the White House Office of Faith-Based  
13          and Neighborhood Partnerships, and any other  
14          agency that the Secretary determines appro-  
15          priate—

16          “(i) assess and identify Clearinghouse  
17          best practices and recommendations for  
18          which there are no resources available  
19          through Federal Government programs for  
20          implementation;

21          “(ii) provide feedback on the imple-  
22          mentation of best practices and recommen-  
23          dations of the Clearinghouse; and

1                   “(iii) propose additional recommenda-  
2                   tions for best practices for inclusion in the  
3                   Clearinghouse; and

4                   “(C) not less frequently than annually, ex-  
5                   amine and update the Clearinghouse in accord-  
6                   ance with—

7                   “(i) the information collected under  
8                   subparagraph (A); and

9                   “(ii) the recommendations proposed  
10                  under subparagraph (B)(iii).

11                 “(2) ANNUAL REPORT TO CONGRESS.—The  
12                 Secretary shall submit to Congress, on an annual  
13                 basis, a report on the updates made to the Clearing-  
14                 house during the preceding 1-year period under  
15                 paragraph (1)(C), which shall include a description  
16                 of any changes made to the Clearinghouse.”.

17                 (b) TECHNICAL AMENDMENTS.—The table of con-  
18                 tents in section 1(b) of the Homeland Security Act of  
19                 2002 (Public Law 107–296; 116 Stat. 2135), as amended  
20                 by section 9 of this Act, is amended by inserting after  
21                 the item relating to section 2220 the following:

                  “Sec. 2220A. Federal Clearinghouse on Safety Best Practices for Faith-Based  
                  Organizations and Houses of Worship.”.

22                 **SEC. 4. NOTIFICATION OF CLEARINGHOUSE.**

23                 The Secretary shall provide written notification of the  
24                 establishment of the Clearinghouse, with an overview of

1 the resources required as described in section 2220A of  
2 the Homeland Security Act of 2002, as added by section  
3 3 of this Act, and section 5 of this Act, to—

4 (1) every State homeland security advisor;

5 (2) every State department of homeland secu-  
6 rity;

7 (3) other Federal agencies with grant programs  
8 or initiatives that aid in the safety and security of  
9 faith-based organizations and houses of worship, as  
10 determined appropriate by the Secretary;

11 (4) every Federal Bureau of Investigation Joint  
12 Terrorism Task Force;

13 (5) every Homeland Security Fusion Center;

14 (6) every State or territorial Governor or other  
15 chief executive;

16 (7) the Committee on Homeland Security and  
17 Governmental Affairs and the Committee on the Ju-  
18 diciary of the Senate; and

19 (8) the Committee on Homeland Security and  
20 the Committee on the Judiciary of the House of  
21 Representatives.

22 **SEC. 5. GRANT PROGRAM OVERVIEW.**

23 (a) DHS GRANTS AND RESOURCES.—The Secretary  
24 shall include a grants program overview on the website  
25 of the Clearinghouse that shall—

1           (1) be the primary location for all information  
2 regarding Department grant programs that are open  
3 to faith-based organizations and houses of worship;

4           (2) directly link to each grant application and  
5 any applicable user guides;

6           (3) identify all safety and security homeland se-  
7 curity assistance programs managed by the Depart-  
8 ment that may be used to implement best practices  
9 and recommendation of the Clearinghouse;

10          (4) annually, and concurrent with the applica-  
11 tion period for any grant identified under paragraph  
12 (1), provide information related to the required ele-  
13 ments of grant applications to aid smaller faith  
14 based organizations and houses of worship in earn-  
15 ing access to Federal grants; and

16          (5) provide frequently asked questions and an-  
17 swers for the implementation of best practices and  
18 recommendations of the Clearinghouse and best  
19 practices for applying for a grant identified under  
20 paragraph (1).

21          (b) OTHER FEDERAL GRANTS AND RESOURCES.—

22 Each Federal agency notified under section 4(3) shall pro-  
23 vide necessary information on any Federal grant programs  
24 or resources of the Federal agency that are available for  
25 faith-based organizations and houses of worship to the

1 Secretary or the appropriate point of contact for the  
2 Clearinghouse.

3 (c) STATE GRANTS AND RESOURCES.—

4 (1) IN GENERAL.—Any State notified under  
5 paragraph (1), (2), or (6) of section 4 may provide  
6 necessary information on any grant programs or re-  
7 sources of the State available for faith-based organi-  
8 zations and houses of worship to the Secretary or  
9 the appropriate point of contact for the Clearing-  
10 house.

11 (2) IDENTIFICATION OF RESOURCES.—The  
12 Clearinghouse shall, to the extent practicable, iden-  
13 tify, for each State—

14 (A) each agency responsible for safety for  
15 faith-based organizations and houses of worship  
16 in the State, or any State that does not have  
17 such an agency designated;

18 (B) any grant program that may be used  
19 for the purposes of implementing best practices  
20 and recommendations of the Clearinghouse; and

21 (C) any resources or programs, including  
22 community prevention or intervention efforts,  
23 that may be used to assist in targeted violence  
24 and terrorism prevention.

1 **SEC. 6. OTHER RESOURCES.**

2 The Secretary shall, on the website of the Clearing-  
3 house, include a separate section for other resources that  
4 shall provide a centralized list of all available points of  
5 contact to seek assistance in grant applications and in car-  
6 rying out the best practices and recommendations of the  
7 Clearinghouse, including—

8 (1) a list of contact information to reach De-  
9 partment personnel to assist with grant-related ques-  
10 tions;

11 (2) the applicable Cybersecurity and Infrastruc-  
12 ture Security Agency contact information to connect  
13 houses of worship with Protective Security Advisors;

14 (3) contact information for all Department Fu-  
15 sion Centers, listed by State;

16 (4) information on the If you See Something  
17 Say Something Campaign of the Department; and

18 (5) any other appropriate contacts.

19 **SEC. 7. RULE OF CONSTRUCTION.**

20 Nothing in this Act or the amendments made by this  
21 Act shall be construed to create, satisfy, or waive any re-  
22 quirement under Federal civil rights laws, including—

23 (1) title II of the Americans With Disabilities  
24 Act of 1990 (42 U.S.C. 12131 et seq.); or

25 (2) title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (42  
26 U.S.C. 2000d et seq.).

1 **SEC. 8. EXEMPTION.**

2 Chapter 35 of title 44, United States Code (com-  
3 monly known as the “Paperwork Reduction Act”) shall  
4 not apply to any rulemaking or information collection re-  
5 quired under this Act or under section 2220A of the  
6 Homeland Security Act of 2002, as added by section 3  
7 of this Act.

8 **SEC. 9. TECHNICAL CORRECTIONS.**

9 (a) REDESIGNATIONS.—Subtitle A of title XXII of  
10 the Homeland Security Act of 2002 (6 U.S.C. 651 et seq.)  
11 is amended—

12 (1) by redesignating section 2217 (6 U.S.C.  
13 665f) as section 2220;

14 (2) by redesignating section 2216 (6 U.S.C.  
15 665e) as section 2219;

16 (3) by redesignating the fourth section 2215  
17 (relating to Sector Risk Management Agencies) (6  
18 U.S.C. 665d) as section 2218;

19 (4) by redesignating the third section 2215 (re-  
20 lating to the Cybersecurity State Coordinator) (6  
21 U.S.C. 665c) as section 2217; and

22 (5) by redesignating the second section 2215  
23 (relating to the Joint Cyber Planning Office) (6  
24 U.S.C. 665b) as section 2216.

1 (b) TECHNICAL AND CONFORMING AMENDMENTS.—  
 2 Section 2202(c) of the Homeland Security Act of 2002  
 3 (6 U.S.C. 652(c)) is amended—

4 (1) in the first paragraph (12), by striking  
 5 “section 2215” and inserting “section 2217”; and

6 (2) by redesignating the second and third para-  
 7 graphs (12) as paragraphs (13) and (14), respec-  
 8 tively.

9 (c) TABLE OF CONTENTS.—The table of contents in  
 10 section 1(b) of the Homeland Security Act of 2002 (Public  
 11 Law 107–296; 116 Stat. 2135) is amended by striking  
 12 the item relating to section 2214 and all that follows  
 13 through the item relating to section 2217 and inserting  
 14 the following:

“Sec. 2214. National Asset Database.

“Sec. 2215. Duties and authorities relating to .gov internet domain.

“Sec. 2216. Joint Cyber Planning Office.

“Sec. 2217. Cybersecurity State Coordinator.

“Sec. 2218. Sector Risk Management Agencies.

“Sec. 2219. Cybersecurity Advisory Committee.

“Sec. 2220. Cybersecurity education and training programs.”.

15 (d) ADDITIONAL TECHNICAL AMENDMENT.—

16 (1) AMENDMENT.—Section 904(b)(1) of the  
 17 DOTGOV Act of 2020 (title IX of division U of  
 18 Public Law 116–260) is amended, in the matter pre-  
 19 ceding subparagraph (A), by striking “Homeland  
 20 Security Act” and inserting “Homeland Security Act  
 21 of 2002”.

1           (2) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendment made  
2           by paragraph (1) shall take effect as if enacted as  
3           part of the DOTGOV Act of 2020 (title IX of divi-  
4           sion U of Public Law 116–260).

○