

118TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 3627

To establish the President’s Council on Improving Federal Civic Architecture,
and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

MAY 24, 2023

Mr. BANKS introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee
on Transportation and Infrastructure

A BILL

To establish the President’s Council on Improving Federal
Civic Architecture, 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 “Beautifying Federal
5 Civic Architecture Act”.

6 **SEC. 2. POLICY OF THE UNITED STATES.**

7 It is the policy of the United States that—

8 (1) applicable Federal public buildings should—

9 (A) uplift and beautify public spaces;

10 (B) inspire the human spirit;

1 (C) ennoble the United States;

2 (D) command respect from the general
3 public;

4 (E) be visually identifiable as civic build-
5 ings; and

6 (F) as appropriate, respect regional archi-
7 tectural heritage;

8 (2) architecture, with particular regard for tra-
9 ditional and classical architecture, that meets the
10 criteria described in paragraph (1) is the preferred
11 architecture for applicable Federal public buildings;

12 (3) in the District of Columbia, classical archi-
13 tecture is the preferred and default architecture for
14 Federal public buildings absent exceptional factors
15 necessitating another style of architecture;

16 (4) where the architecture of applicable Federal
17 public buildings diverges from the preferred architec-
18 ture, great care and consideration shall be taken to
19 choose a design that—

20 (A) commands respect from the general
21 public; and

22 (B) clearly conveys to the general public
23 the dignity, enterprise, vigor, and stability of
24 the system of self-government of the United
25 States;

1 (5) when renovating, reducing, or expanding ap-
2 plicable Federal public buildings that do not meet
3 the criteria described in paragraph (1), the feasi-
4 bility and potential expense of building redesign to
5 meet those criteria should be examined;

6 (6) where feasible and economical, a redesign
7 described in paragraph (5) should be given substan-
8 tial consideration, especially with respect to the exte-
9 rior of the applicable Federal building; and

10 (7) the Administration should seek input from
11 future users of applicable Federal public buildings
12 and the general public in the community where those
13 buildings will be located before selecting an architec-
14 tural firm or design style and give the general
15 public's input substantial consideration.

16 **SEC. 3. DEFINITIONS.**

17 In this Act:

18 (1) 2023 DOLLARS.—The term “2023 dollars”
19 means dollars adjusted for inflation using, with
20 2023 as the base year, the Gross Domestic Product
21 price deflator of the Bureau of Economic Analysis.

22 (2) ADMINISTRATION.—The term “Administra-
23 tion” means the General Services Administration.

1 (3) ADMINISTRATOR.—The term “Adminis-
2 trator” means the Administrator of General Serv-
3 ices.

4 (4) APPLICABLE FEDERAL PUBLIC BUILDING.—

5 (A) IN GENERAL.—The term “applicable
6 Federal public building” means—

7 (i) any Federal courthouse;

8 (ii) any Federal agency headquarters;

9 (iii) any public building in the District
10 of Columbia; and

11 (iv) any other public building the cost
12 or expected cost to design, build, and finish
13 of which is more than \$50,000,000 in
14 2023 dollars.

15 (B) EXCLUSIONS.—The term “applicable
16 Federal public building” does not include an in-
17 frastructure project or land port of entry.

18 (5) BRUTALIST.—The term “Brutalist” means
19 the style of architecture that grew out of the early
20 20th-century modernist movement that is character-
21 ized by a massive and block-like appearance with a
22 rigid geometric style and large-scale use of exposed
23 poured concrete.

24 (6) CLASSICAL ARCHITECTURE.—

1 (A) IN GENERAL.—The term “classical ar-
2 chitecture” means the architectural tradition—

3 (i) derived from the forms, principles,
4 and vocabulary of the architecture of
5 Greek and Roman antiquity; and

6 (ii) later developed and expanded on
7 by—

8 (I) Renaissance architects, in-
9 cluding Alberti, Brunelleschi, Michel-
10 angelo, and Palladio;

11 (II) Enlightenment masters, in-
12 cluding Robert Adam, John Soane,
13 and Christopher Wren;

14 (III) 19th Century architects, in-
15 cluding Benjamin Henry Latrobe,
16 Robert Mills, Louise Blanchard Be-
17 thune, and Thomas U. Walter; and

18 (IV) 20th Century practitioners,
19 including Julian Abele, Daniel
20 Burnham, Charles F. McKim, Robert
21 Robinson Taylor, John Russell Pope,
22 Julia Morgan, and the firm of Delano
23 and Aldrich.

24 (B) INCLUSIONS.—The term “Classical ar-
25 chitecture” includes styles such as Neoclassical,

1 Georgian, Federal, Greek Revival, Beaux-Arts,
2 and Art Deco.

3 (7) COUNCIL.—The term “Council” means the
4 President’s Council on Improving Federal Civic Ar-
5 chitecture established by section 4(a).

6 (8) DECONSTRUCTIVIST.—The term
7 “Deconstructivist” means the style of architecture—

8 (A) generally known as
9 “deconstructivism”; and

10 (B) that emerged during the late 1980s
11 that subverts the traditional values of architec-
12 ture through features such as fragmentation,
13 disorder, discontinuity, distortion, skewed geom-
14 etry, and the appearance of instability.

15 (9) GENERAL PUBLIC.—The term “general
16 public” means members of the public who are not—

17 (A) artists, architects, engineers, art or ar-
18 chitecture critics, instructors or professors of
19 art or architecture, or members of the building
20 industry; or

21 (B) affiliated with any interest group,
22 trade association, or any other organization
23 whose membership is financially affected by de-
24 cisions involving the design, construction, or re-
25 modeling of applicable Federal public buildings.

1 (10) OFFICER.—The term “officer” has the
2 meaning given such term in section 2104 of title 5,
3 United States Code.

4 (11) PREFERRED ARCHITECTURE.—The term
5 “preferred architecture” means the architecture de-
6 scribed in section 2(2).

7 (12) PUBLIC BUILDING.—The term “public
8 building” has the meaning given such term in sec-
9 tion 3301(a) of title 40, United States Code.

10 (13) TRADITIONAL ARCHITECTURE.—The term
11 “traditional architecture” includes—

12 (A) classical architecture; and

13 (B) the historic humanistic architecture,
14 including Gothic, Romanesque, Pueblo Revival,
15 Spanish Colonial, and other Mediterranean
16 styles of architecture historically rooted in var-
17 ious regions of America.

18 **SEC. 4. PRESIDENT’S COUNCIL ON IMPROVING FEDERAL**
19 **CIVIC ARCHITECTURE.**

20 (a) ESTABLISHMENT.—There is established the
21 President’s Council on Improving Federal Civic Architec-
22 ture.

23 (b) MEMBERSHIP.—

24 (1) IN GENERAL.—The Council shall be com-
25 posed of—

1 (A) the chair of the Commission of Fine
2 Arts;

3 (B) all prior living chairs of the Commis-
4 sion of Fine Arts who elect to serve;

5 (C) the Secretary of the Commission of
6 Fine Arts;

7 (D) the Architect of the Capitol;

8 (E) the Commissioner of the Public Build-
9 ing Service of the Administration; and

10 (F) the Chief Architect of the Administra-
11 tion.

12 (2) CHAIR.—

13 (A) IN GENERAL.—The Council shall be
14 chaired by an individual described in paragraph
15 (1)(A), who shall be designated by the Presi-
16 dent.

17 (B) VICE CHAIR; SUBCOMMITTEES.—The
18 Chair of the Council may—

19 (i) designate a Vice Chair; and

20 (ii) establish subcommittees.

21 (3) COMPENSATION.—

22 (A) NO COMPENSATION.—Except as pro-
23 vided in subparagraph (B), a member of the
24 Council shall receive no compensation as a re-
25 sult of serving on the Council.

1 (B) TRAVEL EXPENSES.—A member of the
2 Council shall be allowed travel expenses, includ-
3 ing per diem in lieu of subsistence, at rates au-
4 thorized for employees of agencies under sub-
5 chapter I of chapter 57 of title 5, United States
6 Code, while away from their homes or regular
7 places of business in the performance of serv-
8 ices for the Council.

9 (c) DUTIES OF THE COUNCIL.—The Council shall—
10 (1) not later than 1 year after the date of en-
11 actment of this Act, submit to the Administrator a
12 report recommending updates to policies and proce-
13 dures of the Administration that—

14 (A) incorporates the policy of the United
15 States described in section 2, including how the
16 recommended updates to policies and proce-
17 dures will accomplish such policy; and

18 (B) advances the purposes of this Act, in-
19 cluding how those recommendations accomplish
20 those purposes; and

21 (2) recommend to the Administrator changes to
22 Administration policies for situations in which the
23 Administration participates in a design selection
24 pursuant to chapter 89 of title 40, United States
25 Code (commonly known as the “Commemorative

1 Works Act”), in furtherance of the purposes of this
2 Act and consistent with applicable law.

3 (d) ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT; STAFF.—

4 (1) ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT.—On request of
5 the Council, the Administrator shall provide funding
6 and administrative and technical support to the
7 Council.

8 (2) STAFF.—The Administrator—

9 (A) shall direct employees of the Adminis-
10 tration to provide any relevant information the
11 Council requests; and

12 (B) may detail those employees to aid in
13 the work of the Council, on request of the
14 Council.

15 (e) FACA FUNCTIONS.—Any functions of the Presi-
16 dent under chapter 10 of title 5, United States Code, ex-
17 cept for the reporting to Congress under section 1005(b)
18 of that title, shall be performed by the Administrator in
19 accordance with guidelines and procedures established by
20 the Administrator.

21 (f) TERMINATION.—The Council shall terminate on
22 the date that is 5 years after the date on which the Council
23 first meets.

1 **SEC. 5. GSA REQUIREMENTS.**

2 (a) IN GENERAL.—The Administrator shall adhere to
3 the policy of the United States described in section 2.

4 (b) NOTIFICATION.—

5 (1) IN GENERAL.—If the Administrator pro-
6 poses to approve a design for a new applicable Fed-
7 eral public building that diverges from the preferred
8 architecture, including Brutalist or Deconstructivist
9 architecture or any design derived from or related to
10 those styles of architecture, the Administrator shall
11 submit to the Assistant to the President for Domes-
12 tic Policy, the Committee on Homeland Security and
13 Governmental Affairs of the Senate, and the Com-
14 mittee on Oversight and Accountability of the House
15 of Representatives not later than 30 days before the
16 date on which the Administrator could reject the de-
17 sign without incurring substantial expenditures a no-
18 tification in accordance with paragraph (2).

19 (2) REQUIREMENTS.—A notification submitted
20 under paragraph (1) shall describe the reasons the
21 Administrator proposes to approve a design de-
22 scribed in that paragraph, including—

23 (A) a detailed explanation of why the Ad-
24 ministrator believes selecting the design is justi-
25 fied, with particular focus on whether the de-
26 sign is as beautiful and reflective of the dignity,

1 enterprise, vigor, and stability of the system of
2 self-government in the United States as alter-
3 native designs of comparable cost using pre-
4 ferred architecture;

5 (B) the total expected cost of adopting the
6 proposed design, including estimated mainte-
7 nance and replacement costs throughout the ex-
8 pected lifecycle of the design; and

9 (C)(i) a description of the designs using
10 preferred architecture seriously considered for
11 the project; and

12 (ii) the total expected cost of adopting
13 those designs, including estimated maintenance
14 and replacement costs throughout the expected
15 lifecycles of those designs.

16 **SEC. 6. SAVINGS PROVISION.**

17 Nothing in this Act—

18 (1) impairs or otherwise affects—

19 (A) the authority granted by law to an ex-
20 ecutive department or agency, or the head
21 thereof; or

22 (B) the functions of the Director of the Of-
23 fice of Management and Budget relating to
24 budgetary, administrative, or legislative pro-
25 posals; or

1 (2) creates any right or benefit, substantive or
2 procedural, enforceable at law or in equity by any
3 party against—

4 (A) the United States, including—

5 (i) any department, agency, or entity
6 of the United States; or

7 (ii) any officer, employee, or agent of
8 the United States; or

9 (B) any other person.

10 **SEC. 7. REPORT TO CONGRESS.**

11 On an annual basis, the Administrator shall submit
12 to the Committee on Oversight and Accountability of the
13 House of Representatives and the Committee on Home-
14 land Security and Governmental Affairs a report about the
15 promulgation of this Act, detailing adherence to the policy
16 of the United States described in section 2.

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