

118TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

S. 5318

To direct the Secretary of Defense, in consultation with the heads of certain agencies and organizations, to conduct a study on the health effects of indoor residential mold growth in military unaccompanied housing or other housing on military installations, and for other purposes.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

NOVEMBER 14, 2024

Mr. BLUMENTHAL (for himself and Mr. MURPHY) introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Armed Services

A BILL

To direct the Secretary of Defense, in consultation with the heads of certain agencies and organizations, to conduct a study on the health effects of indoor residential mold growth in military unaccompanied housing or other housing on military installations, 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 “Healthy at Home on
5 Base Act of 2024”.

1 **SEC. 2. ELIMINATION OF INDOOR RESIDENTIAL MOLD IN**
2 **HOUSING OF DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE.**

3 (a) STUDY AND REPORT ON HEALTH IMPACTS OF
4 INDOOR RESIDENTIAL MOLD.—

5 (1) STUDY.—

6 (A) IN GENERAL.—As soon as practicable
7 after the date of the enactment of this Act, the
8 Secretary of Defense, in consultation with the
9 Assistant Secretary of Defense for Health Af-
10 fairs, the Secretary of Housing and Urban De-
11 velopment, the Director of the Centers for Dis-
12 ease Control and Prevention, the Administrator
13 of the Environmental Protection Agency, the
14 Secretary of Energy, the Secretary of Health
15 and Human Services, the President of the Na-
16 tional Academy of Sciences, and the Chair of
17 the board of directors of the National Institute
18 of Building Sciences shall conduct a comprehen-
19 sive study on the health effects of indoor resi-
20 dential mold growth in military unaccompanied
21 housing or other housing on military installa-
22 tions, using the most up-to-date scientific peer-
23 reviewed medical literature.

24 (B) ELEMENTS.—The study conducted
25 under subparagraph (A) shall ascertain—

1 (i) detailed information about harmful
2 or toxigenic mold that may impact the
3 military departments and individuals living
4 on military installations, as well as any
5 toxin or toxic compound such mold can
6 produce;

7 (ii) the most accurate research-based
8 methods of detecting harmful or toxigenic
9 mold;

10 (iii) potential dangers of prolonged or
11 chronic exposure to indoor residential mold
12 growth in residential areas on military in-
13 stallations;

14 (iv) the hazards involved with inad-
15 equate mold inspections on military instal-
16 lations and improper indoor residential
17 mold remediation in military unaccom-
18 panied housing;

19 (v) the estimated current public
20 health burden of new or exacerbated phys-
21 ical illness resulting from exposure to in-
22 door residential mold and the effect of
23 such exposure on the military departments
24 and quality of life for members of the
25 Armed Forces, including with respect to

1 readiness of the Armed Forces and the im-
2 pact on children in military families;

3 (vi) improved understanding of the
4 different health symptomology that can re-
5 sult from exposure to mold in indoor resi-
6 dential environments on military installa-
7 tions, including military unaccompanied
8 housing;

9 (vii) ongoing surveillance of the preva-
10 lence of idiopathic pulmonary hemorrhage
11 in infants living on military installations;
12 and

13 (viii) longitudinal studies on the ef-
14 fects of indoor mold exposure in early
15 childhood on the development of asthma
16 and other respiratory illnesses of children
17 living on military installations.

18 (2) REPORT.—

19 (A) IN GENERAL.—Not later than three
20 years after the date of the enactment of this
21 Act, the Secretary of Defense shall submit to
22 Congress and the President a report that con-
23 tains the results of the study conducted under
24 paragraph (1).

1 (B) FORM.—The report required by sub-
2 paragraph (A) shall be submitted in unclassi-
3 fied form, but may include a classified index.

4 (b) HEALTH, SAFETY, AND HABITABILITY STAND-
5 ARDS AND MODEL STANDARDS.—

6 (1) MODEL STANDARDS FOR PREVENTING, DE-
7 TECTING, AND REMEDIATING INDOOR RESIDENTIAL
8 MOLD GROWTH.—Based on the results of the inter-
9 agency health study conducted under subsection (a),
10 the Secretary of Defense, in consultation with the
11 Administrator of the Environmental Protection
12 Agency, the Secretary of Housing and Urban Devel-
13 opment, the Director of the Centers for Disease
14 Control and Prevention, the Assistant Secretary of
15 Labor for Occupational Safety and Health, the Sec-
16 retary of Energy, the Executive Director of the Na-
17 tional Institute of Building Sciences, and the Presi-
18 dent of the National Academy of Sciences shall, in
19 accordance with section 12(d) of the National Tech-
20 nology Transfer and Advancement Act of 1995
21 (Public Law 104–113; 15 U.S.C. 272 note), jointly
22 issue model health, safety, and habitability stand-
23 ards for preventing, detecting, and remediating in-
24 door residential mold growth on military installa-
25 tions, including—

1 (A) model residential mold inspection
2 standards for military unaccompanied housing;

3 (B) model indoor residential mold remedi-
4 ation standards for military installations;

5 (C) standards for testing the toxicity of in-
6 door residential mold and any toxin or toxic
7 compound produced by indoor residential mold
8 on military installations;

9 (D) health and safety standards for the
10 protection of those inspecting for and remedi-
11 ating mold in housing on military installations;

12 (E) standards for indoor residential mold
13 testing labs that serve military installations;

14 (F) model ventilation standards for the de-
15 sign, installation, and maintenance of air ven-
16 tilation or air-conditioning systems in housing
17 on military installations to prevent indoor resi-
18 dential mold growth or the creation of condi-
19 tions that foster indoor mold growth in housing
20 on military installations; and

21 (G) model building code standards for
22 housing on military installations to control
23 moisture and prevent mold growth.

1 (2) CONSULTATION.—To the maximum extent
2 possible, model standards issued under paragraph
3 (1) shall be developed with the assistance of—

4 (A) organizations that develop mold and
5 water damage standards and work with military
6 installations;

7 (B) organizations involved in establishing
8 national building construction standards and
9 work with military installations;

10 (C) organizations involved in improving in-
11 door air quality;

12 (D) public health advocates that serve the
13 military community; and

14 (E) health and medical professionals that
15 serve members of the Armed Forces and their
16 families, including practitioners that care for
17 children of members of the Armed Forces.

18 (3) RESILIENCY.—Model standards issued
19 under paragraph (1) shall take into account geo-
20 graphic diversity, propensity for extreme weather or
21 flooding, and other resiliency metrics impacting mili-
22 tary housing.

23 (4) DEADLINES.—

24 (A) PUBLIC REVIEW AND COMMENT.—The
25 officials identified in paragraph (1) shall make

1 draft standards issued under such paragraph
2 available for public review and comment not
3 later than 90 days prior to publication of the
4 final standards pursuant to subparagraph (B).

5 (B) PUBLICATION.—Not later than three
6 years after the date on which the results of the
7 study conducted under subsection (a) are sub-
8 mitted to Congress in accordance with such
9 subsection, the officials identified in paragraph
10 (1) shall issue, and make available to the pub-
11 lic, final standards under this subsection.

12 (5) REVIEW AND UPDATES.—The officials iden-
13 tified in paragraph (1) shall—

14 (A) review the model standards issued
15 under this subsection not less frequently than
16 once every five years based on the latest sci-
17 entific advances and published studies relating
18 to indoor residential mold growth; and

19 (B) update such standards as necessary to
20 preserve and improve the quality of housing on
21 military installations and prevent the displace-
22 ment of those currently living on military instal-
23 lations.

24 (c) CONSTRUCTION REQUIREMENTS FOR NEW HOUS-
25 ING ON MILITARY INSTALLATIONS.—

1 (1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of Defense, in
2 consultation with the Secretary of Housing and
3 Urban Development, the Executive Director of the
4 National Institute of Building Sciences, and the
5 President of the National Academy of Sciences, to
6 the extent such Director and President agree to par-
7 ticipate, shall develop model construction standards
8 and techniques for preventing and controlling indoor
9 residential mold in new residential properties on
10 military installations.

11 (2) CONTENTS.—The model standards and
12 techniques developed under paragraph (1) shall pro-
13 vide for geographic differences in construction types
14 and materials, geology, weather, and other variables
15 that may affect indoor residential mold levels in new
16 buildings and on various military installations.

17 (3) CONSULTATION.—To the maximum extent
18 possible, model standards and techniques shall be
19 developed under paragraph (1) with the assistance
20 of—

21 (A) organizations involved in establishing
22 national building construction standards and
23 techniques, especially organizations that do that
24 work on military installations;

1 (B) organizations that develop mold and
2 water damage standards on military installa-
3 tions; and

4 (C) public health advocates that serve the
5 military community.

6 (4) PUBLICATION.—

7 (A) DRAFT STANDARDS AND TECH-
8 NIKUES.—The Secretary of Defense shall make
9 a draft of the document containing the model
10 standards and techniques developed under para-
11 graph (1) available for public review and com-
12 ment.

13 (B) FINAL STANDARDS AND TECH-
14 NIKUES.—The Secretary shall make the final
15 model standards and techniques developed
16 under paragraph (1) available to the public not
17 later than one year after the date of the enact-
18 ment of this Act.

19 (5) APPLICABILITY TO NEW CONSTRUCTION
20 AND REHABILITATION.—Not later than one year
21 after the publication of the final model standards
22 and techniques required by paragraph (4)(B), the
23 Secretary of Defense shall include such model stand-
24 ards and techniques as a requirement for residential
25 rehabilitation or new construction projects conducted

1 by the Department of Defense with amounts appro-
2 priated to the Department.

3 (d) EDUCATION FOR MILITARY HEALTH PROFES-
4 SIONALS.—The Secretary of Defense shall include edu-
5 cation for military health professions on mold-related ill-
6 ness, including signs and symptoms of toxigenic mold ex-
7 posure, in recurring training received by military health
8 practitioners at such time and in such manner as the Sec-
9 retary chooses.

10 (e) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

11 (1) INDOOR RESIDENTIAL MOLD.—The term
12 “indoor residential mold” means any form of multi-
13 cellular fungi found in water-damaged indoor envi-
14 ronments and building materials, including
15 cladosporium, penicillium, alternaria, aspergillus, fu-
16 sarium, trichoderma, memnoniella, mucor,
17 stachybotrys chartarum, streptomyces, and
18 epicoccum often.

19 (2) MILITARY INSTALLATION.—The term “mili-
20 tary installation” has the meaning given the term in
21 section 2801(c) of title 10, United States Code.

22 (3) MILITARY UNACCOMPANIED HOUSING.—The
23 term “military unaccompanied housing” has the
24 meaning given that term in section 2871 of title 10,
25 United States Code.

1 (4) TOXIGENIC MOLD.—The term “toxigenic
2 mold” means any indoor mold growth that may be
3 capable of producing a toxin or toxic compound, in-
4 cluding mycotoxins and microbial volatile organic
5 compounds, that can cause pulmonary, respiratory,
6 neurological, gastrointestinal, or dermatological ill-
7 nesses, or other major adverse health impacts, as de-
8 termined by the Secretary of Defense in consultation
9 with the Director of the National Institutes of
10 Health, the Secretary of Housing and Urban Devel-
11 opment, the Administrator of the Environmental
12 Protection Agency, and the Director of the Centers
13 for Disease Control and Prevention.

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