

109TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 3920

To authorize the establishment of domestic violence court systems from amounts available for grants to combat violence against women.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

SEPTEMBER 27, 2005

Ms. SOLIS (for herself, Mrs. CAPITO, and Mrs. CAPPS) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on the Judiciary

A BILL

To authorize the establishment of domestic violence court systems from amounts available for grants to combat violence against women.

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 “Domestic Violence
5 Courts Assistance Act”.

6 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

7 The Congress finds the following:

8 (1) Nearly one-third of American women report
9 being physically or sexually abused by a husband or
10 boyfriend at some point in their lives.

1 (2) Family violence costs the nation between
2 \$5,000,000,000 and \$10,000,000,000 each year in
3 medical expenses, police and court costs, shelters
4 and foster care, sick leave, absenteeism, and non-
5 productivity.

6 (3) The Nation's first specialized domestic vio-
7 lence court was established in Chicago in the early
8 1980s to centralize the prosecution of domestic vio-
9 lence offenders.

10 (4) There are presently more than 300 domestic
11 violence courts in at least 23 States nationwide.

12 (5) Specialized domestic violence courts in sev-
13 eral communities have resulted in cutting the proc-
14 essing time of domestic violence, reducing a backlog
15 of existing domestic violence cases and raising the
16 conviction rate.

17 (6) Specialized domestic violence courts allow
18 judges, prosecutors and defense attorneys to focus
19 on the intricacies of domestic violence cases, espe-
20 cially with regards to repeat offenders.

1 **SEC. 3. ESTABLISHMENT OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE COURT**
2 **SYSTEMS FROM AMOUNTS AVAILABLE FOR**
3 **GRANTS TO COMBAT VIOLENCE AGAINST**
4 **WOMEN.**

5 (a) IN GENERAL.—Part T of the Omnibus Crime
6 Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968 (relating to grants
7 to combat violent crimes against women) is amended as
8 follows:

9 (1) PURPOSES FOR WHICH GRANTS MAY BE
10 USED.—Section 2001(b) of that Act (42 U.S.C.
11 3796gg(b)) is amended—

12 (A) in paragraph (10), by striking “and”
13 at the end;

14 (B) in paragraph (11), by striking the pe-
15 riod at the end and inserting “; and”; and

16 (C) by adding at the end the following new
17 paragraph:

18 “(12) providing the resources to establish and
19 maintain a court system dedicated to the adjudica-
20 tion of domestic violence cases, including providing
21 such resources as—

22 “(A) prosecutors and court personnel, in-
23 cluding those who perform interpretation and
24 translation services;

25 “(B) technical assistance and counseling;

1 “(C) training of attorneys, judges, and
2 court personnel, including those who perform
3 interpretation and translation services (which
4 should be carried out in consultation with local
5 domestic violence advocates, State domestic vio-
6 lence coalitions, or both);

7 “(D) technological improvements and data
8 collection; and

9 “(E) improvement of court facilities, in-
10 cluding the creation of safe waiting areas and
11 improved security.”.

12 (2) QUALIFICATION FOR FUNDS.—Section
13 2002(c)(3)(C) of that Act (42 U.S.C. 3796gg–
14 1(c)(3)(C)) is amended by inserting after “including
15 juvenile courts” the following: “and specialized do-
16 mestic violence courts”.

17 (b) ATTORNEY GENERAL REPORT.—Not later than
18 thirty days after the expiration of the third fiscal year be-
19 ginning after the date of the enactment of this Act, the
20 Attorney General shall submit to Congress a report on the
21 implementation and effectiveness of the amendments made
22 by subsection (b), including the effectiveness of grants
23 made under such amendments in reducing the rates of do-
24 mestic violence and shortening the period of judicial review
25 in domestic violence cases.

1 (c) STATE JUSTICE INSTITUTE.—Section 206(c) of
2 the State Justice Institute Act of 1984 (42 U.S.C.
3 10705(c)) is amended—

4 (1) in paragraph (14) by striking “and”;

5 (2) in paragraph (15) by striking the period at
6 the end and inserting a semicolon; and

7 (3) by adding at the end the following new
8 paragraphs:

9 “(16) implement and evaluate court-based ap-
10 proaches to adjudicating domestic violence cases in
11 State courts, including—

12 “(A) domestic violence courts;

13 “(B) integrated case management informa-
14 tion systems;

15 “(C) collaborations among courts, law en-
16 forcement agencies, social service agencies,
17 women’s shelters, and victims of crime support
18 organizations; and

19 “(D) any other innovative practices likely
20 to improve the criminal justice system’s re-
21 sponse to domestic violence; and

22 “(17) provide technical assistance to State
23 courts to facilitate the development and adoption of
24 improved practices in the adjudication of domestic
25 violence cases.”.

1 (d) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There
2 are authorized to be appropriated to carry out paragraphs
3 (16) and (17) of section 206(c) of the State Justice Insti-
4 tute Act of 1984, as added by subsection (c), \$1,500,000
5 for each of fiscal years 2006 through 2009.

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