

114TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

S. 1559

To protect victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, stalking, and dating violence from emotional and psychological trauma caused by acts of violence or threats of violence against their pets.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

JUNE 11, 2015

Ms. AYOTTE (for herself and Mr. PETERS) introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry

A BILL

To protect victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, stalking, and dating violence from emotional and psychological trauma caused by acts of violence or threats of violence against their pets.

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 “Pet and Women Safety
5 Act of 2015”.

1 **SEC. 2. PET INVOLVEMENT IN CRIMES RELATED TO DO-**
 2 **MESTIC VIOLENCE AND STALKING.**

3 (a) INTERSTATE STALKING.—Section 2261A of title
 4 18, United States Code, is amended—

5 (1) in paragraph (1)(A)—

6 (A) in clause (ii), by striking “or” at the
 7 end; and

8 (B) by inserting after clause (iii) the fol-
 9 lowing:

10 “(iv) the pet of that person; or”; and

11 (2) in paragraph (2)(A)—

12 (A) by inserting after “to a person” the
 13 following: “or a pet”; and

14 (B) by striking “or (iii)” and inserting
 15 “(iii), or (iv)”.

16 (b) INTERSTATE VIOLATION OF PROTECTION
 17 ORDER.—Section 2262 of title 18, United States Code,
 18 is amended—

19 (1) in subsection (a)—

20 (A) in paragraph (1), by inserting after
 21 “another person” the following: “or the pet of
 22 that person”; and

23 (B) in paragraph (2), by inserting after
 24 “proximity to, another person” the following
 25 “or the pet of that person”; and

1 (2) in subsection (b)(5), by inserting after “in
2 any other case,” the following: “including any case
3 where the offense is committed against a pet,”.

4 (c) RESTITUTION TO INCLUDE VETERINARY SERV-
5 ICES.—Section 226(b)(3) of title 18, United States Code,
6 is amended—

7 (1) by redesignating subparagraph (F) as sub-
8 paragraph (G);

9 (2) in subparagraph (E), by striking “and” at
10 the end; and

11 (3) by inserting after subparagraph (E) the fol-
12 lowing:

13 “(F) veterinary services relating to phys-
14 ical care for the victim’s pet; and”.

15 (d) PET DEFINED.—Section 2266 of title 18, United
16 States Code, is amended by inserting after paragraph (10)
17 the following:

18 “(11) PET.—The term ‘pet’ means a domes-
19 ticated animal, such as a dog, cat, bird, rodent, fish,
20 turtle, horse, or other animal that is kept for pleas-
21 ure rather than for commercial purposes.”.

1 **SEC. 3. EMERGENCY AND TRANSITIONAL PET SHELTER**
2 **AND HOUSING ASSISTANCE GRANT PRO-**
3 **GRAM.**

4 (a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of Agriculture, act-
5 ing in consultation with the Director of the Violence
6 Against Women Office of the Department of Justice, the
7 Secretary of Housing and Urban Development, and the
8 Secretary of Health and Human Services, shall award
9 grants under this section to eligible entities to carry out
10 programs to provide the assistance described in subsection
11 (c) with respect to victims of domestic violence, dating vio-
12 lence, sexual assault, or stalking and the pets of such vic-
13 tims.

14 (b) APPLICATION.—

15 (1) IN GENERAL.—An eligible entity seeking a
16 grant under this section shall submit an application
17 to the Secretary at such time, in such manner, and
18 containing such information as the Secretary may
19 reasonably require, including—

20 (A) a description of the activities for which
21 a grant under this section is sought;

22 (B) such assurances as the Secretary de-
23 termines to be necessary to ensure compliance
24 by the entity with the requirements of this sec-
25 tion; and

1 (C) a certification that the entity, before
2 engaging with any individual domestic violence
3 victim, will disclose to such victim any manda-
4 tory duty of the entity to report instances of
5 abuse and neglect (including instances of abuse
6 and neglect of pets).

7 (2) ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS.—In addition
8 to the requirements of paragraph (1), each applica-
9 tion submitted by an eligible entity under such para-
10 graph shall—

11 (A) not include proposals for any activities
12 that may compromise the safety of a domestic
13 violence victim, including—

14 (i) background checks of domestic vio-
15 lence victims; or

16 (ii) clinical evaluations to determine
17 the eligibility of such a victim for support
18 services;

19 (B) not include proposals that would re-
20 quire mandatory services for victims or that a
21 victim obtain a protective order in order to re-
22 ceive proposed services; and

23 (C) reflect the eligible entity's under-
24 standing of the dynamics of domestic violence,
25 dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking.

1 (3) RULES OF CONSTRUCTION.—Nothing in
2 this subsection shall be construed to require—

3 (A) domestic violence victims to participate
4 in the criminal justice system in order to re-
5 ceive services; or

6 (B) eligible entities receiving a grant under
7 this section to breach client confidentiality.

8 (c) USE OF FUNDS.—Grants awarded under this sec-
9 tion may only be used for programs that provide—

10 (1) emergency and transitional pet shelter and
11 housing assistance, including assistance with respect
12 to any construction or operating expenses of newly
13 developed or existing emergency and transitional pet
14 shelter and housing (regardless of whether such
15 shelter and housing is co-located at a victim service
16 provider or within the community);

17 (2) short-term pet shelter and housing assist-
18 ance, including assistance with respect to expenses
19 incurred for the temporary shelter, housing, board-
20 ing, or fostering of the pets of domestic violence vic-
21 tims and other expenses that are incidental to secur-
22 ing the safety of such a pet during the sheltering,
23 housing, or relocation of such victims;

24 (3) support services designed to enable a do-
25 mestic violence victim who is fleeing a situation of

1 domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or
 2 stalking to—

3 (A) locate and secure safe housing with
 4 their pet or safe accommodations for their pet;
 5 or

6 (B) provide the victim with pet-related
 7 services, such as pet transportation, pet care
 8 services, and other assistance; or

9 (4) for the training of relevant stakeholders
 10 on—

11 (A) the link between domestic violence,
 12 dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking and
 13 the abuse and neglect of pets;

14 (B) the needs of domestic violence victims;

15 (C) best practices for providing support
 16 services to such victims;

17 (D) best practices for providing such vic-
 18 tims with referrals to victims' services; and

19 (E) the importance of confidentiality.

20 (d) GRANT CONDITIONS.—An eligible entity that re-
 21 ceives a grant under this section shall, as a condition on
 22 such receipt, agree—

23 (1) to be bound by the nondisclosure of con-
 24 fidential information requirements of section

1 40002(b)(2) of the Violence Against Women Act of
2 1994 (42 U.S.C. 13925(b)(2)); and

3 (2) that the entity shall not condition the re-
4 ceipt of support, housing, or other benefits provided
5 pursuant to this section on the participation of do-
6 mestic violence victims in any or all of the support
7 services offered to such victims through a program
8 carried out by the entity using grant funds.

9 (e) DURATION OF ASSISTANCE PROVIDED TO VIC-
10 TIMS.—

11 (1) IN GENERAL.—Subject to paragraph (2),
12 assistance provided with respect to a pet of a domes-
13 tic violence victim using grant funds awarded under
14 this section shall be provided for a period of not
15 more than 24 months.

16 (2) EXTENSION.—An eligible entity that re-
17 ceives a grant under this section may extend the 24-
18 month period referred to in paragraph (1) for a pe-
19 riod of not more than 6 months in the case of a do-
20 mestic violence victim who—

21 (A) has made a good faith effort to acquire
22 permanent housing for their pet during such
23 24-month period; and

24 (B) has been unable to acquire such per-
25 manent housing within such period.

1 (f) REPORT TO THE SECRETARY.—Not later than 1
2 year after the date on which an eligible entity receives a
3 grant under this section and each year thereafter, such
4 entity shall submit to the Secretary of Agriculture a re-
5 port. Such report shall contain, with respect to assistance
6 provided by such entity with respect to pets of domestic
7 violence victims using grant funds received under this sec-
8 tion, information on—

9 (1) the number of pets provided such assist-
10 ance; and

11 (2) the purpose, amount, type of, and duration
12 of such assistance.

13 (g) REPORT TO CONGRESS.—

14 (1) REPORTING REQUIREMENT.—Not later than
15 November 1 of each even-numbered fiscal year, the
16 Secretary of Agriculture shall submit to the Com-
17 mittee on Agriculture of the House of Representa-
18 tives and the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition,
19 and Forestry of the Senate a report that contains a
20 compilation of the information contained in the re-
21 port submitted under subsection (f).

22 (2) AVAILABILITY OF REPORT.—The Secretary
23 of Agriculture shall transmit a copy of the report
24 submitted under paragraph (1) to—

1 (A) the Office on Violence Against Women
2 of the Department of Justice;

3 (B) the Office of Community Planning and
4 Development at the Department of Housing
5 and Urban Development; and

6 (C) the Administration for Children and
7 Families at the Department of Health and
8 Human Services.

9 (h) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—

10 (1) IN GENERAL.—There are authorized to be
11 appropriated to carry out this section \$3,000,000 for
12 each of fiscal years 2016 through 2020.

13 (2) LIMITATION.—Of the amount made avail-
14 able under paragraph (1) in any fiscal year, not
15 more than 5 percent may be used for evaluation,
16 monitoring, technical assistance, salaries, and ad-
17 ministrative expenses.

18 (i) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

19 (1) DOMESTIC VIOLENCE VICTIM DEFINED.—
20 The term “domestic violence victim” means a victim
21 of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault,
22 or stalking.

23 (2) ELIGIBLE ENTITY.—The term “eligible enti-
24 ty” means—

25 (A) a State;

1 (B) a general unit of local government;

2 (C) an Indian tribe; or

3 (D) any other organization that has a doc-
4 umented history of effective work concerning
5 domestic violence, dating violence, sexual as-
6 sault, or stalking (as determined by the Sec-
7 retary), including—

8 (i) a domestic violence and sexual as-
9 sault victim service provider;

10 (ii) a domestic violence and sexual as-
11 sault coalition;

12 (iii) a community-based and culturally
13 specific organization;

14 (iv) any other nonprofit, nongovern-
15 mental organization; and

16 (v) any organization that works di-
17 rectly with pets and collaborates with any
18 organization referred to in clauses (i)
19 through (iv), including—

20 (I) an animal shelter; and

21 (II) an animal welfare organiza-
22 tion.

23 **SEC. 4. SENSE OF CONGRESS.**

24 It is the sense of Congress that States should encour-
25 age the inclusion of protections against violent or threat-

- 1 ening acts against the pet of the person in domestic vio-
- 2 lence protection orders.

