

115TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

H. R. 6701

To require the Secretary of Housing and Urban Development to improve services for survivors of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

SEPTEMBER 4, 2018

Mr. POE of Texas (for himself and Mr. O'HALLERAN) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Financial Services

A BILL

To require the Secretary of Housing and Urban Development to improve services for survivors of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking.

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 “Help End Abusive Liv-
5 ing Situations Act” or the “HEALS Act”.

6 **SEC. 2. DEFINITIONS.**

7 In this Act—

8 (1) the term “domestic violence” has the mean-
9 ing given the term in section 40002(a) of the Vio-

1 lence Against Women Act of 1994 (42 U.S.C.
2 13925(a));

3 (2) the term “domestic violence project” means
4 a project administered by a victim service provider
5 designed to meet the needs of survivors of domestic
6 violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking;

7 (3) the term “homeless individual” has the
8 meaning given the term in section 103 of the
9 McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act (42
10 U.S.C. 11302);

11 (4) the terms “homeless individual with a dis-
12 ability”, “permanent housing”, “tenant-based”,
13 “transitional housing”, and “victim service provider”
14 have the meanings given those terms in section 401
15 of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act (42
16 U.S.C. 11360);

17 (5) the term “rapid re-housing project” means
18 supportive services and short- or medium-term ten-
19 ant-based rental assistance, as necessary, to help a
20 homeless individual, with or without a disability,
21 move into permanent housing; and

22 (6) the term “Secretary” means the Secretary
23 of Housing and Urban Development.

1 **SEC. 3. STRENGTHENING HOUSING RESOURCES PROTEC-**
2 **TIONS FOR VICTIMS OF DOMESTIC VIO-**
3 **LENCE, DATING VIOLENCE, SEXUAL ASSAULT,**
4 **AND STALKING.**

5 Not later than 180 days after the date of enactment
6 of this Act, the Secretary shall take the following measures
7 to improve services provided to survivors of domestic vio-
8 lence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking:

9 (1) STRATEGIC PLAN.—The Secretary shall cre-
10 ate a section in the next strategic plan of the De-
11 partment of Housing and Urban Development re-
12 quired under section 306 of title 5, United States
13 Code, that—

14 (A) outlines a thorough response to the
15 housing needs of survivors of domestic violence,
16 dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking and
17 their families;

18 (B) provides that, for purposes of scoring
19 applicants in the notice of funding availability
20 for the Continuum of Care program authorized
21 under subtitle C of title IV of the McKinney-
22 Vento Homeless Assistance Act (42 U.S.C.
23 11381 et seq.) in any fiscal year, the Secretary
24 shall give equal consideration to—

25 (i) rapid re-housing projects;

1 (ii) projects that provide permanent
2 supportive housing; and

3 (iii) domestic violence projects that
4 maximize client choice, including transi-
5 tional housing;

6 (C) authorizes any defunded transitional
7 housing project to reapply for funding; and

8 (D) authorizes rapid re-housing projects
9 to provide not less than 6 months and not more
10 than 24 months of assistance.

11 (2) EVALUATION.—The Secretary shall de-
12 velop—

13 (A) measurable criteria upon which appli-
14 cants are evaluated to demonstrate their col-
15 laboration with victim service providers to de-
16 velop local policy priorities focused on survivors
17 of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual as-
18 sault, or stalking, including survivor-centered
19 coordinated entry processes that appropriately
20 assess and prioritize those survivors and take
21 into account the safety and confidentiality
22 needs of those survivors; and

23 (B) mechanisms that promote the provi-
24 sion of technical assistance and support for pro-

grams to improve outcomes instead of reallocating or not awarding funds.

(3) RESEARCH AGENDA.—The Secretary shall develop a research agenda that focuses on survivors of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking and the housing modalities that best support them, especially the critical safety concerns and the link between trauma and residential stability.

SEC. 4. INCREASING ACCESS TO SAFE HOUSING FOR SURVIVORS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE, DATING VIOLENCE, SEXUAL ASSAULT, AND STALKING.

Section 427(b) of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 11386a(b)) is amended—

(1) in paragraph (1)(F)—

(A) in clause (i), by striking “or” at the end;

(B) in clause (ii), by striking “and” and the end and inserting “or”; and

(C) by adding at the end the following:

“(iii) success in meeting the safety and trauma needs of survivors of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking, including access to safe housing; and”;

1 (2) by adding at the end the following:

2 “(4) CRITERIA FOR VICTIM SERVICES PRO-
3 VIDERS.—With respect to recipients that are victim
4 service providers, the Secretary shall evaluate the
5 provider based on the ability to meet the safety and
6 trauma needs of victims served by the provider, in-
7 cluding access to safe housing.”.

8 **SEC. 5. REPORT TO CONGRESS.**

9 Not later than 1 year after the date of enactment
10 of this Act, the Secretary shall submit to Congress a re-
11 port on—

12 (1) the trends in allocating resources beginning
13 after the date of enactment of the Homeless Emer-
14 gency Assistance and Rapid Transition to Housing
15 Act of 2009 (Public Law 111–22; 123 Stat. 1663)
16 to address the housing needs of survivors of domes-
17 tic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and
18 stalking; and

19 (2) the increase in the allocation of resources
20 for domestic violence projects beginning after the
21 date of enactment of this Act.

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