

116TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

H. R. 7637

To establish a New Executive Workgroup for the White House as an Iconic Treasure Expressing Honor, Obligation, Unity, Strength, and Excellence of our Nation (a New White House) to develop a plan to replace the existing White House with a new residence and working space for the President, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

JULY 16, 2020

Ms. JACKSON LEE introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Oversight and Reform

A BILL

To establish a New Executive Workgroup for the White House as an Iconic Treasure Expressing Honor, Obligation, Unity, Strength, and Excellence of our Nation (a New White House) to develop a plan to replace the existing White House with a new residence and working space for the President, 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; FINDINGS.**

4 (a) SHORT TITLE.—This Act may be cited as the
5 “New Executive Workgroup for the White House as an
6 Iconic Treasure Expressing Honor, Obligation, Unity,

1 Strength, and Excellence of our Nation Act” or the “New
2 White House Act”.

3 (b) FINDINGS.—Congress finds the following:

4 (1) In 1789, the United States became the
5 world’s first modern national constitutional republic.

6 (2) In 1791, the Nation’s first president,
7 George Washington, selected the site for the White
8 House, and the cornerstone was laid in 1792, after
9 a competition design submitted by Irish-born archi-
10 tect James Hoban was chosen.

11 (3) The security of the White House and the
12 First Family has always been of utmost importance
13 to the Nation.

14 (4) The security needs of the White House have
15 evolved along with the Nation. As conditions war-
16 ranted, the White House has been modified in order
17 to meet these evolving needs.

18 (5) In 1808, the first fence around the White
19 House was constructed under the oversight of
20 Thomas Jefferson’s administration. This fence was
21 constructed of wooden split-rail barriers on three
22 sides of the grounds and a retaining wall on the
23 other side which bordered the Potomac River wet-
24 lands.

1 (6) In the 1930s, the wrought-iron fence of the
2 19th century was replaced by a steel fence tipped
3 with tall bronze spears.

4 (7) The current fence is about 7-feet tall and
5 there are plans to install a taller one in 2018.

6 (8) During World War II, security became es-
7 pecially strict. The remaining gaps in the White
8 House fence were closed and access to the driveways
9 was restricted. At the same time, the gates to the
10 White House grounds were reinforced.

11 (9) In 1983, following a truck-bomb attack on
12 the U.S. Marine barracks in Lebanon, low concrete
13 walls were put up around the White House.

14 (10) With the rise of vehicle traffic in Wash-
15 ington DC, bollards—sturdy, vertical posts—were
16 added to prevent security breaches by automobiles.

17 (11) In 1950, an assassination attempt on
18 President Harry S. Truman further raised concerns
19 over the safety of the President.

20 (12) In the 20th century, there were numerous
21 instances of the White House perimeter being
22 breached by those who wished to reach the Presi-
23 dent.

24 (13) On April 13, 1912, Michael Winter made
25 it several feet inside the front door of the White

1 House before being stopped by staff. This was his
2 second attempt to reach President William Howard
3 Taft.

4 (14) On September 26, 1963, Doyle Allen
5 Hicks rammed his pickup truck through the White
6 House gates and drove 25 feet into the North Por-
7 tico main entrance. He intended to reach President
8 John F. Kennedy.

9 (15) On February 17, 1974, Robert K. Preston,
10 an Army private, stole a helicopter from Fort
11 Meade, Maryland. He hovered over the Washington
12 Monument and the White House grounds before
13 leading two State police helicopters on an aerial
14 chase around Maryland and Washington, DC. Pres-
15 ton then returned to the White House and officers
16 were forced to shoot at the helicopter. Preston was
17 upset about flunking out of flight school.

18 (16) On February 22, 1974, Samuel Joseph
19 Byck tried to hijack a Delta passenger jet at Balti-
20 more-Washington International Airport. His inten-
21 tion was to crash the jet into the White House. He
22 forced his way onto the plane and killed an airport
23 policeman and the copilot before being shot by po-
24 lice.

1 (17) On December 25, 1974, Marshall Fields
2 crashed his automobile through the Northwest Gate
3 of the White House and drove close to the North
4 Portico. He threatened to detonate explosives which
5 he had strapped to his body. Fields surrendered to
6 officials after hours of negotiation.

7 (18) In October 1978, Anthony Henry scaled
8 the White House fence while wielding a knife. He
9 slashed two officers before White House guards were
10 able to subdue him. He intended to find President
11 Jimmy Carter.

12 (19) On September 12, 1994, Frank Eugene
13 Corder stole a Cessna plane and entered the prohib-
14 ited airspace around the White House. He crashed
15 on the lawn just south of the Executive Mansion.

16 (20) On October 29, 1994, Francisco Martin
17 Duran, armed with a semiautomatic rifle, fired over
18 29 rounds at the White House from the sidewalk on
19 Pennsylvania Avenue. He intended to kill President
20 Bill Clinton.

21 (21) On May 23, 1995, Leland W. Modjeski
22 climbed over the White House fence and ran towards
23 the White House with a handgun. He was shot by
24 the Secret Service.

1 (22) On September 11, 2001, President George
2 W. Bush was taken to an undisclosed location due
3 to security concerns at the White House following
4 attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pen-
5 tagon.

6 (23) A 2015 House of Representatives report
7 showed that there were 104 attempted breaches of
8 White House security between April 2005 and April
9 2015.

10 (24) On November 11, 2011, Oscar Ramiro Or-
11 tega-Hernandez fired an assault rifle at the White
12 House. He hit the residential wing of the building at
13 least seven times. This attack was not immediately
14 detected and Ortega-Hernandez was not found and
15 arrested for 5 days.

16 (25) On January 26, 2015, the Secret Service
17 was forced to lock down the White House due to a
18 drone flying above the White House grounds. The
19 drone crashed on the Southeast side of the complex.

20 (26) On November 26, 2015, a man draped in
21 an American flag jumped the White House fence
22 during a Thanksgiving celebration at the Executive
23 Residence.

24 (27) It is now time to build an Executive Office
25 and Residence which takes modern national security

1 concerns into account and will be able to serve the
2 Office of the President far into the future.

3 **SEC. 2. ESTABLISHMENT OF COMMISSION.**

4 There is established the Commission for the Con-
5 struction of a Modern Executive Mansion and Office Com-
6 plex for the President (hereafter referred to as the “Com-
7 mission”).

8 **SEC. 3. DUTIES.**

9 The Commission shall carry out the following duties:

10 (1) The development of a plan, including a site
11 selection plan, to replace the existing White House
12 with a new residence and working space for the
13 President in the District of Columbia which meets
14 modern standards for security, access, and the needs
15 of the President and the President’s staff.

16 (2) The development of a plan (including a plan
17 for fundraising) for the preservation of the docu-
18 ments, artifacts, and artworks which reflect the his-
19 tory of the existing White House and for making
20 such items accessible for public viewing, including by
21 establishing a museum, with the goal of promoting
22 public knowledge of the history of the White House
23 and the individuals, including family members of the
24 Presidents, who lived and worked there.

1 (3) The development of a plan for the tem-
2 porary relocation of the residence and working space
3 of the President and the President's staff while the
4 new residence and working space is under construc-
5 tion.

6 **SEC. 4. MEMBERSHIP.**

7 (a) NUMBER AND APPOINTMENT.—The Commission
8 shall be composed of the following members:

9 (1) Each living former President (as of the date
10 of the enactment of this Act) or the living former
11 President's designee.

12 (2) The Administrator of General Services or
13 the Administrator's designee.

14 (3) The Secretary of Homeland Security or the
15 Secretary's designee.

16 (4) Each former Director of the Secret Service
17 who served during the term of office of President
18 George W. Bush or President Barack Obama.

19 (5) The Archivist of the United States or the
20 Archivist's designee.

21 (6) A representative of each Presidential library
22 which is not administered by the National Archives
23 and Records Administration though the Office of
24 Presidential Libraries.

1 (7) One individual appointed by the President
2 from among a list provided by the Speaker of the
3 House of Representatives.

4 (8) One individual appointed by the President
5 from among a list provided by the minority leader of
6 the House of Representatives.

7 (9) One individual appointed by the President
8 from among a list provided by the majority leader of
9 the Senate.

10 (10) One individual appointed by the President
11 from among a list provided by the minority leader of
12 the Senate.

13 (11) One individual appointed by the President
14 with expertise in the field of historic preservation.

15 (12) One individual appointed by the President
16 with expertise in the field of civil engineering.

17 (13) One individual appointed by the President
18 with expertise in the field of landscape architecture
19 and botany.

20 (14) One individual appointed by the President
21 with expertise in the field of security.

22 (b) TIME OF APPOINTMENT.—Each initial appoint-
23 ment of a member of the Commission shall be made before
24 the expiration of the 180-day period beginning on the date
25 of the enactment of this Act.

1 (c) TERMS.—Each member shall be appointed for the
2 life of the Commission.

3 (d) VACANCIES.—A vacancy in the Commission shall
4 not affect the powers of the Commission but shall be filled
5 in the manner in which the original appointment was
6 made.

7 (e) BASIC PAY.—Members shall serve on the Com-
8 mission without pay.

9 (f) TRAVEL EXPENSES.—Each member shall receive
10 travel expenses, including per diem in lieu of subsistence,
11 in accordance with sections 5702 and 5703 of title 5,
12 United States Code.

13 (g) CHAIR.—The Commission shall select a Chair
14 from among the members of the Commission.

15 (h) MEETINGS.—The Commission shall meet at the
16 call of the Chair.

17 **SEC. 5. DIRECTOR AND STAFF.**

18 (a) DIRECTOR.—The Commission may appoint and
19 fix the pay of a Director and such additional personnel
20 as the Commission considers to be appropriate.

21 (b) APPLICABILITY OF CERTAIN CIVIL SERVICE
22 LAWS.—

23 (1) DIRECTOR.—The Director of the Commis-
24 sion may be appointed without regard to the provi-
25 sions of title 5, United States Code, governing ap-

1 pointments in the competitive service, and may be
2 paid without regard to the provisions of chapter 51
3 and subchapter III of chapter 53 of that title relat-
4 ing to classification and General Schedule pay rates.

5 (2) STAFF.—The staff of the Commission shall
6 be appointed subject to the provisions of title 5,
7 United States Code, governing appointments in the
8 competitive service, and shall be paid in accordance
9 with the provisions of chapter 51 and subchapter III
10 of chapter 53 of that title relating to classification
11 and General Schedule pay rates.

12 (c) STAFF OF FEDERAL AGENCIES.—Upon the re-
13 quest of the Chair of the Commission, the head of any
14 Federal department or agency may detail, without reim-
15 bursement, any of the personnel of that department or
16 agency to the Commission to assist in carrying out its du-
17 ties under this Act.

18 **SEC. 6. POWERS.**

19 (a) HEARINGS AND SESSIONS.—The Commission
20 may, for the purpose of carrying out this Act, hold such
21 hearings, sit and act at such times and places, take such
22 testimony, and receive such evidence as the Commission
23 considers to be appropriate.

24 (b) POWERS OF MEMBERS AND AGENTS.—Any mem-
25 ber or agent of the Commission may, if authorized by the

1 Commission, take any action that the Commission is au-
2 thorized to take by this Act.

3 (c) OBTAINING OFFICIAL DATA.—The Commission
4 may secure directly from any department or agency of the
5 United States information necessary to enable the Com-
6 mission to carry out this Act. Upon request of the Chair
7 of the Commission, the head of that department or agency
8 shall furnish that information to the Commission.

9 (d) MAILS.—The Commission may use the United
10 States mails in the same manner and under the same con-
11 ditions as other departments and agencies of the United
12 States.

13 (e) ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT SERVICES.—Upon
14 the request of the Commission, the Administrator of Gen-
15 eral Services shall provide to the Commission, on a reim-
16 bursable basis, the administrative support services nec-
17 essary for the Commission to carry out its responsibilities
18 under this Act.

19 (f) DONATIONS.—The Commission may accept dona-
20 tions of supplies, money, and services to carry out its re-
21 sponsibilities.

22 **SEC. 7. REPORTS.**

23 (a) INTERIM REPORTS.—The Commission may sub-
24 mit to Congress such interim reports as the Commission
25 considers to be appropriate.

1 (b) FINAL REPORT.—The Commission shall submit
2 a final report to Congress not later than 2 years after the
3 date of the enactment of this Act. The final report shall
4 contain final versions of the plans the Commission is re-
5 quired to develop under section 3, together with such other
6 information and recommendations as the Commission con-
7 siders appropriate with respect to such plans.

8 **SEC. 8. TERMINATION.**

9 The Commission shall terminate 120 days after sub-
10 mitting the final report of the Commission under section
11 7.

12 **SEC. 9. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.**

13 There are authorized to be appropriated such sums
14 as may be necessary to carry out this Act.

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